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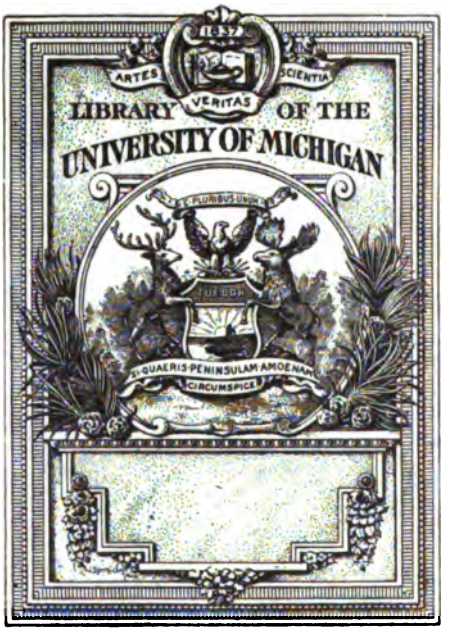

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THE

WINDSOR MAGAZINE

AN ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY

FOR

MEN AND WOMEN

VOL. XXXVI

JUNE TO NOVEMBER 1912

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"THE SCANTY MEAL." BY J. F. HERRING.

From the original in the National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, S.W.

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"A HORSE DRINKING." BY J. F. HERRING.

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THE ART OF J. F. HERRING.

BY AUSTIN CHESTER.

THE English school of animal-painting was not, in its earlier stages, a large one. James Wotton, who died in 1765, was the first Englishman to distinguish himself in this branch of art; he was followed by George Morland, who died in 1804; by George Stubbs, who died in 1806. There were then alive John Frederick Herring and Edwin Landseer, to connect up animal-painting with the work subsequently done by T. Sidney Cooper and others, and to-day by Briton Riviere, Lady Butler, Arthur Wardle, Maud Earl, and Lucy Kemp-Welch —to instance some of the most prominent of our living animal-painters.

The reason why the painting of animals so little commended itself to the artistic mind, in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, is probably to be found in the fact that the somewhat prosaic treatment for so long insisted upon by the patrons of art made no demands upon those imaginative faculties which, in the artist, usually go hand-in-hand with ambition in technical dexterity. There was, in fact, "no market" for pictures of wild animals or for those of animals in their wild state. All that was asked for was a "likeness" of some favourite dog or favourite horse. And then, since the subject was held as of higher account than the manner of the picture's execution, such "counterfeit presentment" was relegated to the smoking or gun-room.

Such animals as goats, sheep, cows, and pigs were introduced into canvases as adding to the interest of landscape art rather than as supplying separate interests of their own. The pictorial quality of animal pictures, as apart from pictures into which animals were introduced, was almost entirely lacking,

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therefore, in the work of the men who were the pioneers in this especial field, and, with few exceptions, in that of those who were the animal portrait-painters of the early nineteenth century; but, by 1875, so great a change had been introduced into pictures of this genre that we find Ruskin noting that there was "being evidenced amongst our painters a real element of fine benevolence toward animals." Herring was undoubtedly one of the men responsible for this change; Landseer was another. But Landseer, who was the more popular of the two men, owed some of his popularity to his fanciful situations and to the ingenious and suggestive titles he coined with such facility. His "Children of the Mist," "Uncle Tom and his Wife for Sale," "High Life and Low Life," "Alexander and Diogenes," "Jack in Office," and "A Piper and a Pair of Nutcrackers," all show him, not as endowed with great imaginative power, but as the author of a vast amount of graphic literature.

The same critic who commended "a real element of fine benevolence" as appearing in pictures of animals, held Landseer's work to be warped by caricature—held, too, that he gave up "the true nature of the animal for the sake of a pretty thought or a pleasant jest," that he looked for sentiment or jest primarily, and reached both by means of a romantic fallacy, except in one or two simple and touching pictures such as "The Shepherd's Chief Mourner."

There is not much analogy between the work of Herring and that of Landseer, although "The Deerstalker" is reminiscent of the work of the more popular master.

"A MARE AND FOAL." BY J. F. HERRING.

Herring's work is not theatrical in the way in which Landseer's is, but it holds a knowledge of its subject which not even that of Landseer surpasses. It was as a sportsman, perhaps, rather than as a painter, that he selected his impressions, and as a devout and ardent lover of the horse that he recorded them; but the fact remains that his treatment of his subjects, if without the supreme distinction of style which we have learnt to hold as an essential of true art, is a healthy, vigorous, natural, and agreeable method, and one which many a painter of higher aims fails to show. Ordinarily his themes,

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"THE HALT." BY J. F. HERRING.

From the original in the Public Art Gallery, Leicester, reproduced by permission of the Leicester Art Gallery Committee.

especially the rural ones, have more in common with the versatile vagabondage of Morland than of the story-telling of Landseer, although they lack the divine fire, the glow of which shone through everything which Morland did.

The fire which pervades Herring's work was never that which genius flashes and flickers into blaze, but was rather the steady flame of talent.

Morland, of course, whose finest work was painted between 1790 and 1792, was of the giants in paint, and so prodigal was he in pictorial invention that he must be looked upon less as an animal-painter than as a painter who painted animals because it

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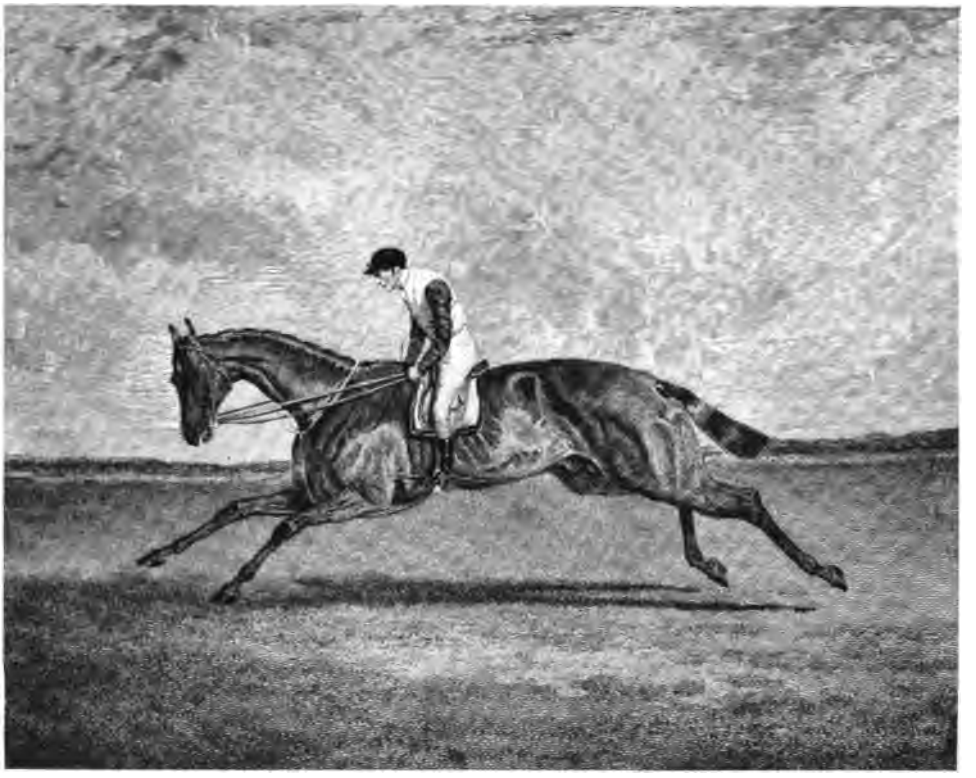
amused him to introduce them into his pictures. He was living when John Frederick Herring was born in 1795; naturally, therefore, by means of engraving, if not from the actual pictures, Herring was conversant with the work of his great forbear, his almost contemporary—those rustic scenes of rural life which he threw off with such unexampled dexterity—and we can trace their influence in pictures such as "Old England," where sheds, barns, trees, ponds, and the broken ground of a farmyard form the background to a picture in which horses, ponies, cows, pigs, ducks, and poultry are introduced. Such a picture, however admirable in executive skill, is too obviously "arranged" to have that quality of meticulous observation impressed upon it which is the chief charm of Herring's ordinary work, and it lacks the craftsman's ease, the gusto and force perceptible in all Morland did.

It was with the meticulous truth of Herring's work that we early became familiar; for engravings of his pictures, hanging conspicuous ornaments on our nursery walls, were endeared to us by means of this quality. "The Halt" and "The Scanty Meal"—how often have we investigated every detail of those prints—how often stroked, in imagination, the sleek coats of the horses, and counted the pigeons which, in their nearness to those horses' hoofs, conducted themselves with a want of caution that seemed almost foolish! How often our minds, which should have been absorbing nurse's lectures on behaviour, have been carried away from the matter in hand by those selfsame horses, to pass thence upon them, by natural transition, in Mazeppa-like excursions totally unwarranted by the sleek and rotund appearance of the steeds!



"DANGEROUS." BY J. F. HERRING.

It was philosophic affection which united us, in the first place, to the familiar work of John Herring, but since those nursery days we have come to see that he had a larger outlook upon equine matters than we then supposed—have come to see that his work holds a very large element of "fine benevolence" towards his model, and that he knew, as did few, how

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"FULL CRY." BY J. F. HERRING.

Reproduced from the large plate published by Messrs. Raphael Tuck & Sons, Moorfields, E.C.

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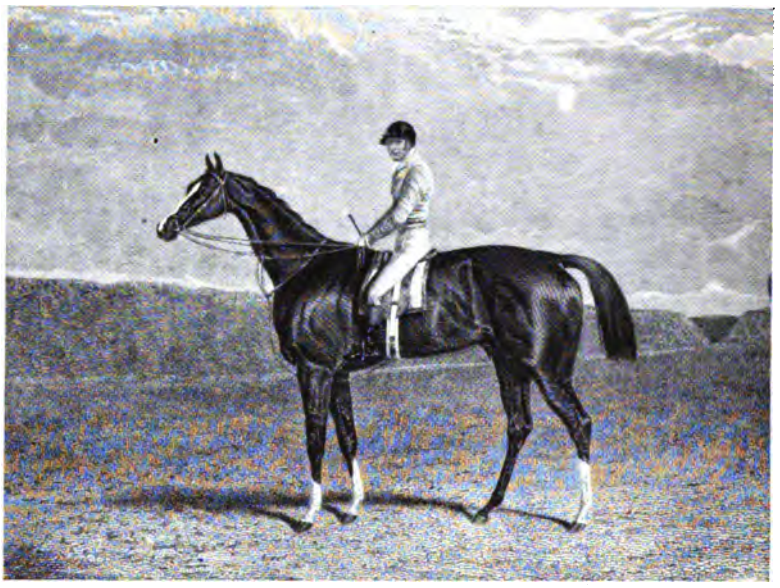
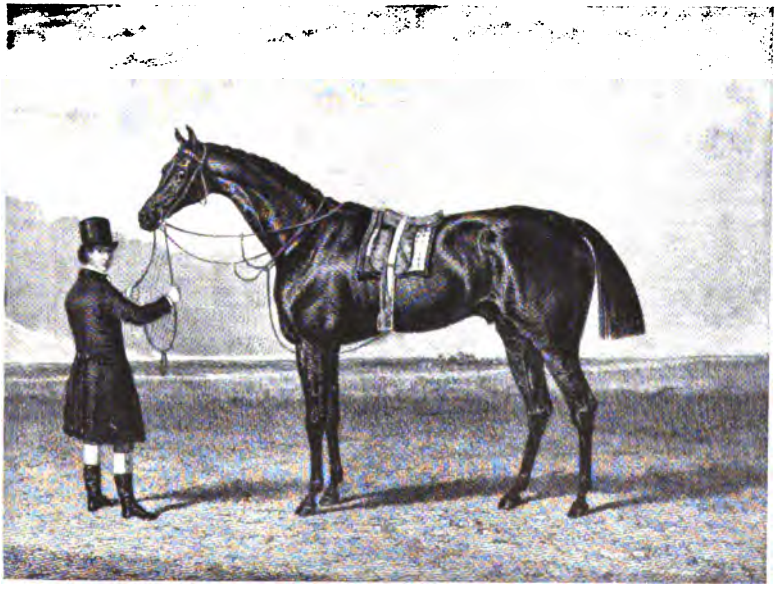
"there is in every animal's eye a dim image and gleam of humanity, a flash of strange light through which their life looks out and up to our great mystery of command over them, and claims the fellowship of the creature, if not of the soul." For not only had he a fine capacity for portraiture, but in every picture of a horse he gives us some insight into its intelligence. His pictures have a tenderness and a gracious quality in addition to their vigour and facility, and it is that quality which has for so many years endeared them to all true lovers of the noble animal.

His work includes less tame varieties of the horse than those shown in "The Halt" and "The Scanty Meal." "The Derby Day," "The Market Day," "Returning from Epsom," "Pharaoh's Chariot Horses," and "The Horse Fair"—in which subject he was the anticipator of Rosa Bonheur—all show his capacity of observation to be bold and untrammelled. This last-named picture, with four agricultural scenes, respectively entitled "Spring," "Summer," "Autumn," and "Winter," when they were reproduced by means of engravings, conquered the heart of our sport-loving nation, and made John Herring, in his time, as popular a print-shop hero as is Dendy Sadler to-day.



"BEIRAM, 1832." BY J. F. HERRING.



"CHORISTER, 1831." BY J. F. HERRING.

The father of John Frederick Herring came from America and settled in London as a maker of fringe, but his grandparents were both Dutch, a point of interest as a connecting link between the faithful portrayal of animal and bird life of the English artist and the older masters of the same

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"THE DEATH." BY J. F. HERRING.

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branch of art in which Holland was much the richer country. Born in Surrey, in 1795, young Herring grew up to work with his father at premises in Newgate Street, in the City, but when eighteen years old, left home, and prompted, apparently, by a love of horses, went to Yorkshire to find employment as a whip. At Doncaster, in the year before the Battle of Waterloo, he

"NANNY." BY J. F. HERRING.

Reproduced from the original in the Public Art Gallery, Blackburn, by permission of the Blackburn Art Gallery Committee.

was present at the race for the St. Leger. He saw the race run, and the Duke of Hamilton's William win, and he also obtained work at some stables, which presently led to his securing the situation of driver to the stage-coach "Nelson," which then ran between Wakefield and Lincoln. Prior to his Yorkshire migration, he had dabbled in paint, and been responsible for several inn signs, but his enthusiasm over the Leger led him to essay the portrait of the winner, and for the next thirty years he repeated the same subject annually.

What was the event or difference of opinion which made it necessary for young Herring, at eighteen, to leave London and his father's roof, we do not know. There is a story to the effect that his parents objected to his marriage, and did this probably on the score of youth.

During the years in which Herring, having a wife to support, earned his livelihood as a whip, he spent his leisure hours in painting, and, indeed, he owed his appointment to "The Nelson" to his proficiency with the brush.

Having failed to make a likeness of

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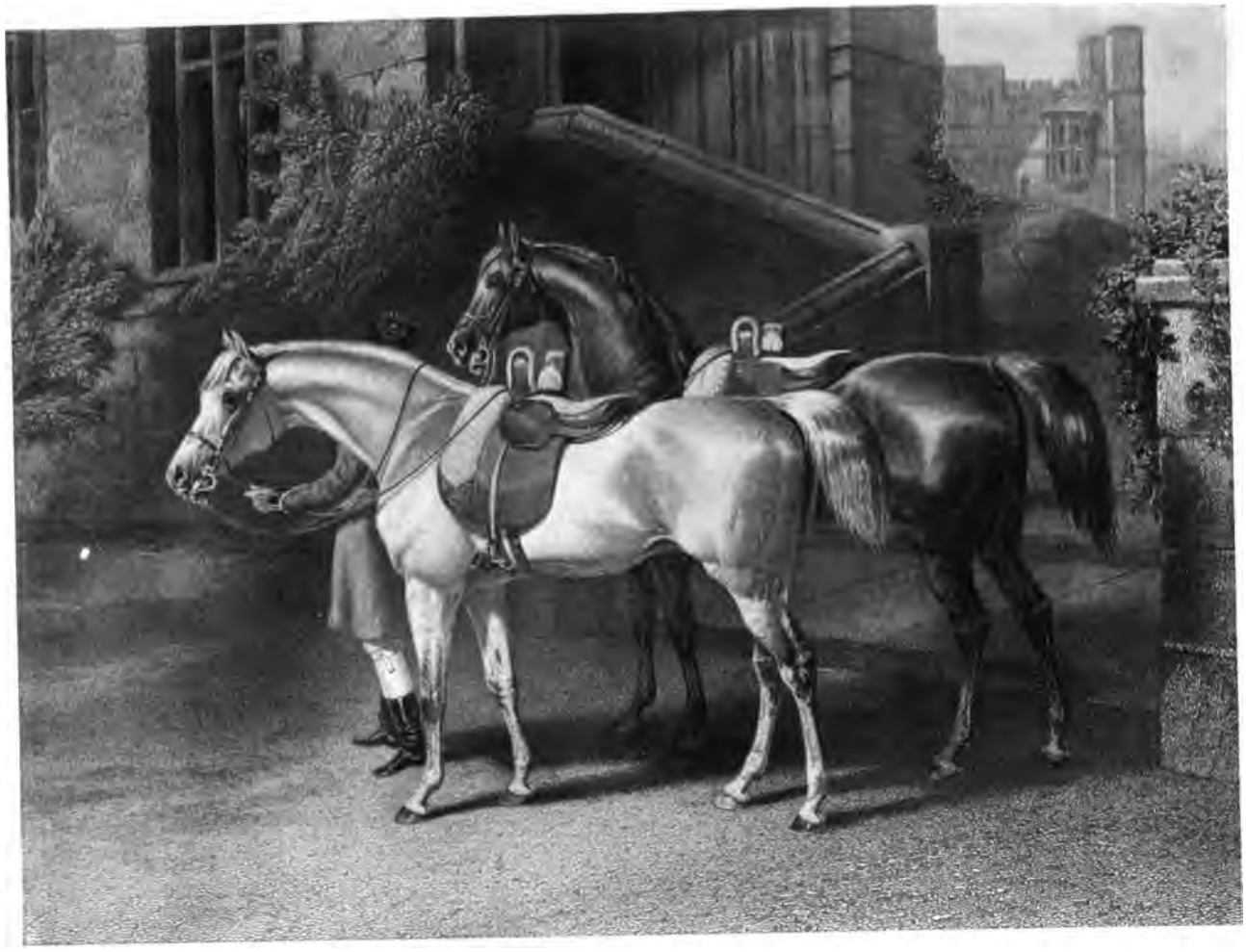

"QUEEN VICTORIA'S HORSES." BY J. F. HERRING.

From the picture in the Royal Collection, reproduced from the engraving published by Messrs. Virtue & Co.

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William that in any way satisfied himself that it did justice to the Duke's famous horse, he was sauntering disconsolately through Doncaster streets, when, in a coach-maker's shop, he saw a young man endeavouring to paint some sort of likeness of the Duke of Wellington on a mail-coach to be called "The Commander-in-Chief."

Herring's offer to "try his hand" at the work being accepted, and the result being commended by the master, Herring got a further job, and he painted the panels for the coach "The Royal Forester." He was taken as guest on this coach's trial trip, and although the notion of a painter being able to handle reins was openly laughed at, he secured an opportunity in which to show "what he could do with the ribands." In

"A GROUP OF DUCKS." BY J. F. HERRING.

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"THE MEET." BY J. F. HERRING.

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"THE DEERSTALKER." BY J. F. HERRING.

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"OLD ENGLAND." BY J. F. HERRING.

Reproduced from the large plate published by Messrs. Henry Graves & Co., Pall Mall, S.W.

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this way he began his career as pilot of "The Nelson."

About this time he also made some designs for signboards for inns which proved popular. One of these, that of "The Brown Cow," at Doncaster, attracted the notice of a Mr. Stanhope, of Cannon Hall, who gave Herring a commission to paint a chestnut horse, paid him well, secured him other remunerative work, and generally stood towards the clever young artist in the position of patron.

Later he vacated the box-seat of "The Nelson" for that of the Doncaster to Halifax coach, from which in turn he was transferred to that of "The High-flyer," which plied between London and York; and he did not descend from this high perch till his spare time success in horse portraiture, done for patrons whom he met upon his journeys, and others who heard of his talent, warranted his devoting himself entirely to art. In order to increase his technical knowledge, he studied for a time under Abraham Cooper, R.A., who had won his position primarily as a painter of animal life, but was subsequently to be known as a vigorous precursor of Lady Butler and the late Ernest Crofts in the painting of battle-fields and scenes of military action generally. His "Battle of Marston Moor," with Oliver Cromwell as central figure, was but lately reproduced in these pages.

J. F. HERRING. BY W. BETHAM.

For some years Herring lived and worked chiefly at Doncaster, and, after painting the winner of the St. Leger of 1814, continued the series of winners without intermission for the next thirty-one years. He also painted many Derby winners. So that from his brush we have a bird's-eye view of the history of the British Turf for a number of years, for his series of winners not only give us a better idea of their points than any written description in a racing calendar can yield, but it carries on up to 1865 the work done by Stubbs, Gilpin, Dunkley, Sartorious, and Marshall.

When Herring started to paint racehorses, our important races were comparatively new to England. Racing, introduced into this country by the Stuarts, was, with the exception of a few irregular races at Newmarket Heath, Croydon, and Banstead Downs, chiefly confined to the county of York, and it was not until well into the latter part of the eighteenth century that definite fixtures were instituted.

In 1770 came the Houghton and the Craven meetings, the St. Leger Stakes in 1776, the Derby and the Oaks Stakes in 1780 and 1779 respectively, the Doncaster Cup in 1801, and the Gold Cup at Ascot in 1807, and the Goodwood meeting was not thought of till 1802. Herring was not born when Diomed and Bridget won the first Derby and Oaks respectively, but he doubtless

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saw run many of the races of which he was afterwards to paint the winners.

Although horses of all shapes and sizes have won big races, yet a study of Herring's racers shows them, as a rule, possessors of chest, upon which the shoulders, for ease in gallop, should be placed obliquely, with long, well-knit upper arms, broad knees, short legs, large fetlocks, and moderately long pasterns. These are the points of a

"THE TROOPER." BY J. F. HERRING, CHARLES BAXTER, AND HENRY BRIGHT.
Painted in collaboration by the three artists. Reproduced from the plate published by Messrs. Virtue & Co.

the well-set-on lean and light head, broad, flat forehead, fine muzzle and large and dilated nostrils, with wide yet light, if muscular, throat, thin crest, withers neither too high nor too slight, with fully-developed racehorse such as Herring delighted to paint. He gives us as definitely, in the hunter, those important points—the well-knit frame, short, muscular forearm, wide knee, and deep chest.

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"FOX-HUNTING: THE START." BY J. F. HERRING.

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Herring's horses—which represent the more important part of his work, or, at any rate, that by which he is best represented on the walls of country houses—show how deftly he marks the line which separates the domestic horse from the hunter and the racer. The muscular development of the last is the chief feature, but with his park hack, bitted to a nicety, thoroughly well trained and well-mannered, he was a little apt to idealise and to become, like S. E. Waller, somewhat of the romantic delineator of the animal. This is not the case in his treatment of racehorses, for then, abandoning all idea save that of literal truth, he gave a free rein to his technical knowledge. This close observation and literalness applies also to his cart-horses, in which we are tempted to think we can trace ancestry to Suffolk Punch, and on occasion to those old Clevelands which are to-day practically extinct.

All the numerous horses he painted show his intimate and quite extraordinary knowledge of each class of animal. Of the mere capacity for portraiture, he had more, perhaps, than any other animal-painter, and what a judge of a horse he must have been!

Herring exhibited far less often in the Academy than he did in the rooms of the Society of British Artists, of which institution he was one of the early members; but as early as 1818 he was an exhibitor at the Academy, and as the painter of a dog. In 1826 Herring's second exhibit within Academy walls was the portrait of Thyrsis, a favourite hunter of Sir George Sitwell. Then came the portrait of the well-known horse Velocipede, and in 1837 "The Portrait of a Favourite Cob, the Property of a Gentleman." This description is reminiscent of an auctioneer's catalogue; but the owner of the cob was by no means desirous of parting with it, for when, at five years old, it was matched to go in harness from Tottenham Court Road to the city of York and back—a distance of four hundred miles—in five days, it won the match, and was none the worse for the feat. "If," said a writer in *The Field*, "anyone possesses a cob which can walk four miles an hour and trot twelve, let him, if he is a rich man, keep him, for he will not get such another in a hurry. If he is a poor one, let him, in offering it for sale, fear not to open his mouth boldly, for a good cob is, of all the equine race, essentially a fancy article, and one, too, for which the demand is always brisk."

If Herring was primarily the portrait-painter of the horse, and the stable-yard was the proper ground of his artistic activities, yet the farmyard presented itself before him in the light of a perfectly comprehended system. His sheep, cows, goats, pigs, dogs, and cats find their proper place in his vocabulary of colour, and the plumage of his most duck-like ducks has the prism which feathers seem to have the power to acquire.

The closer we penetrate into the substance of the work he executed, the sounder, the more level in quality it appears, and the less we cease to wonder that he won recognition not only as a popular subject-painter, and the best animal portrait-painter of his day, but was esteemed worthy the honour of being appointed Animal Painter to H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent—an appointment which was, in those days, a more conclusive evidence of ability than is the appointment of Painter-in-Ordinary to Royalty to-day.

Herring painted several favourite horses of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria, all of which show that gracious feeling for his subject which is a prominent characteristic of his work. These portraits are now in the possession of His Majesty King George V. One of the pictures of these animals here reproduced was a commission from the Duchess of Kent to be presented to the young Princess on her birthday. Her Royal Highness was so pleased with it that she appointed Mr. Herring her animal-painter. As Queen she also subsequently testified her approbation of the work by commanding the artist to paint the portrait of a favourite black horse, as a present from Her Majesty to the Prince Consort on his birthday.

Of the two horses which are here reproduced, the darker was a beautiful chestnut named Hammon. He was bred in the stud of the King of Prussia, and was presented to Her Majesty by the King in 1844.

The grey horse was named Tajar. He was bought in 1844 by M. Meyer from Count Hatzfeld, having been reared at Twenark, in Mecklenburg, by Count Hahn. The horses are represented as standing at one of the private entrances to Windsor Castle.

Herring is well represented in our public galleries. "Nanny" is in the Public Art Gallery at Blackburn, "A Horse Drinking" is in the Dublin Gallery, and Glasgow possesses three pictures of divergent interest—"A Group of Ducks," "The Meet," and "The Deerstalker." "The Halt" is in the Leicester Public Gallery, "The Scanty Meal" is in the National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, and a replica of the last-named picture is in the Leeds Gallery.

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THE STORY OF TWO PORTMANTEAUX.

BY S. MACNAUGHTAN,

Author of "The Fortune of Christina Macnab," "A Lame Dog's Diary," "The Expensive Miss Du Cane," etc.

"IN the first place," said their father, "if there is to be any talk of paying extra for luggage, we may as well give the whole thing up."

"I am only taking my small dress-basket and my hat-case," said Emily. Colonel Brown made a movement suggestive of a desire to scatter ashes upon his head.

"One word more of hat-cases," he remarked, "and I shall forbid the trip altogether. Has anyone in their rational senses ever before contemplated taking a hat-case to Switzerland?"

"You forget the wedding, papa," said Elsie.

But wiser Emily hastily interposed, saying: "If you don't mind my taking my large dress-basket, I know I could get my hats into the tray of that."

"I often wonder," said Colonel Brown mildly, "whether my family have or have not their proper complement of brains."

"I am sure, Robert dear——" began his wife.

"I admit," said the Colonel, "that Emily has passed a large and unnecessary number of Cambridge Local Examinations, but she can neither talk French nor boil a potato."

"We could always roast them," said Elsie helpfully, "if we had to cook for ourselves."

"After all," said Mrs. Brown, "they will only have to travel unprotected as far as Pontresina, and Emily is really clever at looking up Bradshaw."

"And yet," said Colonel Brown, still dangerously calm, "I hear two grown women gravely discussing, within a few days of their departure, whether or not they will take dress-baskets and hat-cases to Switzerland! Am I a millionaire, that I should be asked to pay for my girls carrying about a lot of useless clothes with them? And what, pray, do they intend to do with their dress-baskets on a mule journey to the Riffelhorn, for instance? No, I have said from the first that they had all better stay at home; and dress-baskets and hat-cases have done much to confirm me in my decision."

"Not decision, please, papa," said Elsie.

A happy suggestion was made to her sister by Elsie that they should postpone buying their new wedding hats till they should reach Paris, and that then, unseen by their father, they could take them on to Switzerland in a cardboard box.

"Capital!" exclaimed Emily. "I don't mind how I squeeze the rest of my things, but hats are sacred."

Mary Hume, the girls' greatest friend, had lately become engaged to be married to Sir Hercules Smith, the well-known Alpine climber, and the young couple had decided to be married in Switzerland. Several friends had promised to come out to Pontresina for the wedding, amongst whom were Elsie and Emily Brown.

The day of departure was drawing very near, and still the journey did not seem to be definitely settled. But surely the matter could not fail to be decided, and decided favourably, if small and sensible trunks were immediately purchased? Late as it was in the afternoon, the two girls put on their hats and took a motor-bus to a well-known shop.

The man at the trunk department was most obliging. He seemed to know just the sort of trunk to take to Switzerland, and he displayed two charming portmanteaux, strong and light, which would be equally suitable either for mule-back or train. He was able, too, to give all sorts of useful information about travelling, and he knew to an ounce how much luggage was allowed to each first-class passenger on the Continent. He was altogether a most intelligent and delightful person.

Just as the two fair travellers were leaving the shop, the nice man at the trunk department said that, if madam approved,

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he would suggest that some sort of distinctive mark should be painted upon the two little trunks; madam would find this a great help to claiming her boxes easily at the railway stations. The girls were delighted. "I think," said Emily, "that a yellow stripe round each box would be distinctive and easily identified. Dear me, what is the French for stripe?"

"I think I should prefer a red circle on mine," said Elsie; "I don't care for the idea of the yellow stripe."

Emily bowed gravely to the nice shopman, and said in a grand voice: "We will let you know when we have decided what we will have painted on our boxes."

Once outside the trunk department, she said to her sister: "I do think, Elsie, you were very silly and childish just now. After all, what difference can it make if you have a yellow stripe or a red ring, so long as we know our boxes and can describe them at the railway stations?"

"Well, why not have a red circle on yours, like mine?"

"Dearest," said Emily firmly, "I said yellow first, and I don't really see why I should change; besides, yellow is a much more distinct colour than red."

"Oh, nonsense, Emily!" said Elsie.

"Look here," said Emily, turning back at the china department, on their way out of the building, "why should we not each have what we like? Let's go back and say that you will have a red circle, and I shall have a yellow stripe."

"All right," said Elsie, "only you must do the talking. I should feel so silly, going back and telling the man that we couldn't agree."

* * * * *

The girls decided to travel in their straw hats with the black ribbons, which would be suitable for all occasions, and to pack their Panama hats and their travelling hats in the new trunks, trusting that a man's obtuseness on millinery subjects rendered them quite safe from any difficult questions from their father as to what hats were to be worn at the wedding, and where they were bestowed.

"Very sensible trunks," Colonel Brown called the new portmanteaux, when the appeal had been made to him to admire them. "Only I can't think why you didn't have them painted alike; you will have double trouble at all the stations."

"We don't mind a little trouble, papa," said Emily.

It is not too much to say that her own and her sister's anxiety hardly allowed them to breathe freely until they were seated in the train at Victoria Station, and the two new trunks, not weighing an ounce more than the prescribed weight, had been safely deposited in the luggage van. A small bag containing their combs, hairpins, and sponges occupied a small space on the seat between the two Miss Browns, and these and the new trunks constituted their entire impedimenta.

"We are off! We are off!" exclaimed Elsie in an ecstatic voice, as the train steamed out of the station. "Neither Fate nor papa can touch us now!"

Emily held the railway tickets fast, with a distinct feeling of responsibility tempering her enthusiasm. She was twenty-eight years old, but her parents, having fixed and unalterable ideas regarding the ages of their children, had mentally decided that Emily was fifteen, and inexperienced even for that age, and that Elsie, whose age according to the census was eighteen, was probably about twelve.

The crossing to Calais was bad—very bad. Emily said, before she reached France, that she did not care whether she lived or died, nor what became of anything.

"You said you wanted to gain experience," said Elsie. "Oh, me, how sick I feel!"

"We must try and get a porter," said Emily. "I wonder which is the way out?"

"Ask that man in the gold hat. Oh, here's a porter! *Deux boîtes, s'il vous plait—l'une avec bague rouge et l'autre avec une ligne jaune.*"

The two portmanteaux were readily found. "What should we have done if we had not had them marked?" said the Miss Browns. "*Non, non, rien à declarer!* Why should we smuggle tobacco, I wonder?"

Even when the comparative steadiness of the train had been attained, both girls were silent and thoughtful until Paris was reached. At the French capital, where a few days were to be spent sightseeing, the Miss Browns were to lodge at a quiet but first-class *pension*, of moderate terms combined with every home comfort, kept by a friend's old governess, who, it was arranged, was to bestow some motherly care upon them during their sojourn with her.

"I feel as if everything were heaving up and down," said Emily, with a bewildered air, as she stepped on to the platform at the Gare du Nord. Emily liked to describe her sensations accurately. "I feel as if the top

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of my head had got detached from my body, and my legs did not belong to me," she said. Mentally, she resolved that this was exactly what she would put down in her diary, and it gave her some satisfaction to think how intimately and exactly she would be able by these words to recall her sensations of sea-sickness in after-days. "I wonder what we do now?" she said, putting up her hand to her head. "Dear me, I do wish someone was going to meet us! Yes, a *fiacre*, please. It's wonderful how soon French comes back to one!" She leaned back in the *fiacre*, feeling that by far the larger half of their troubles were over.

The grey-haired proprietress of the first-class *pension*, of moderate terms and every home comfort, prescribed supper and bed as the best restoratives for the young ladies' fatigue, and she presently led them from the *salon* to show them their room.

As they crossed the hall, it was unusual to see a policeman on the door-mat, and the sight might have seriously alarmed our two inexperienced travellers, whose nerves had already been shaken by a stormy crossing, but a policeman without the distinctive helmet and uniform of the English Bobby is not terrifying to the insular mind. Emily and her sister were unaware that the man who looked like a delightful caricature as he gesticulated and waved his hand was, indeed, a policeman at all, until a general panic amongst the boarders, and the frightened whisper passed from mouth to mouth, "Gendarme of police!" made them cling tightly to their little valuables. The panic amongst the lady boarders showed itself in a similar way, and provoked them to similar precautions. Their general inclination seemed to be to go and lock themselves into their bedrooms at once.

The gendarme of police, with the utmost politeness, delayed Madame as she was crossing the hall, and with the help of many shrugs and a free use of both his hands, to illustrate his message, declared that a portmanteau had been that evening stolen from the Gare du Nord, and had ultimately been traced to Madame's *pension*. Could it be produced, or—with a differential bow—would Madame permit a search to be made throughout the house?

To say that Madame was upset by the request would be to understate the case. Madame was furious. Such a thing had never happened in her house before, and a search would not be permitted for a single instant. Her boarders should not be disturbed by any such visitation, "although," concluded Madame, strong in her sense of moral rectitude, "nothing would give her greater satisfaction than to throw open the whole of her rooms to the inspection of the gendarme."

One of the boarders—a German lady of awful respectability—here interposed, and gave up her bedroom on the spot. There had been a little delay respecting the German lady's payment of her weekly account lately, but if she gave up her room, with a fine show of dignity, this trifle might be overlooked. A *femme de chambre*, in a starched white cap with long ends to it, burst into tears, and the gendarme looked suspiciously at her. Elsie and her sister clung together, and longed to be home in peaceful England. It was a heartrending scene. And what, after all, was to be done? No one liked having her room searched, and the first-class *pension*, of home comforts and moderate terms, was scandalised to a woman. Some lady boarders, strong in their integrity, offered the keys of their bedrooms with an air of terrible dignity; others asked leave to go and put their things tidy first. The gendarme of police, becoming every instant more excited and more polite, begged that mesdames would not derange themselves. Only two boxes had arrived from the Gare du Nord that night, and therefore they alone would have to be produced.

"Emily," exclaimed Elsie, "what shall we do? Oh, what shall we do? Please say that papa is an English colonel, and that we have never stolen anything in our lives. Do give his name and address, and mention the Humes, too!"

"This is most unpleasant," said Emily, trying to act the man of the party, and speaking with an air of annoyance that was meant to show that to be suspected of robbery on their first night in Paris was merely a contretemps that might happen to any travellers. "Let the matter be settled at once," she said in a lofty voice, "by producing our boxes!"

Panic number two was caused by the fact that the keys could not be found, until Elsie remembered that they were in the little handbag, inextricably confused with the string of the sponge-bag, but still producible.

All the boarders had by this time collected in the hall, and Madame, begging for privacy at least, directed one Alphonse, in a blue cotton blouse, to bring the portmanteaux down to the dining-room.

Only at that moment did Emily remember,

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with almost a sob of thankfulness, the distinctive marks upon her own and her sister's trunks.

"I can prove that they are ours," she cried triumphantly. "One portmanteau has a red circle upon it, and the other has a yellow stripe!"

At the same moment the portmanteaux appeared—one upon the head and the other in the hand of Alphonse. At Emily's trunk the gendarme of police hardly glanced, but towards Elsie's red-ringed box he made a few rapid strides. "It was an accident; mesdemoiselles were not to blame"—his politeness barely covered his base suspicions—but the label on the box would, of course, at once show them to whom it actually belonged. And, raising a small leather label-frame which depended from the handle of the trunk, and into which a gentleman's visiting card had been inserted, the gendarme of police read out the name: "Monsieur Sharle Airbair."

Elsie wondered why she did not faint on the spot, and Emily, giving way to her natural tendency to diagnosis, always affirmed, in recounting the scene to sympathetic audiences in after-days, that she not only felt her knees give way beneath her, but she had a curious sensation as though she was standing in cold water, and strange thrills of cold were passing up her spine.

Notwithstanding, Emily was the first to recover herself. "*C'est un erreur*," she said. "*Je suis bien sure c'est simplement un erreur.*"

Elsie wanted to tip someone—it was her apology and her plea for mercy in one. "*Pourboire, pourboire*—give him a *pourboire*!" she whispered in a tone of frenzy to her sister, who carried the common purse. Emily tendered a five-franc piece to the gendarme with a sickly smile. "It establishes our guilt at once," she exclaimed a moment after to her sister. "Oh, why did I do it?"

But it was too late to withdraw the five-franc piece, even if it had been possible to do so, for the portmanteau and the gendarme had already removed themselves in a cab.

"Guilty!" was the verdict of the *pension*, when the two Miss Browns at last came to seat themselves at the supper-table. The English boarders thought that it was queer; the German lady openly affirmed that she had been to her room to lock up everything that she possessed. Even a kind-hearted clergyman with white hair—one of Madame's boarders, and, unfortunately, stone deaf—required a full explanation of what he called, with Christian charity, "a strange—a very strange coincidence." And when at last Madame had shouted down his ear-trumpet the facts of the case, the white-haired clergyman looked pained and sceptical. Never had the mouth of his ear-trumpet been in so much demand as it was that evening. Everyone wanted to contradict the whole of the statements which Madame had poured down it.

"Did you say," pursued the clergyman, adhering strictly to evidence, "that the portmanteau had a red circle painted upon it? Then the young lady must have known that it did not belong to her!"

"So!" said the German lady.

"Mine had a red ring, too," shouted Elsie down the ear-trumpet.

"Very unlikely," said one of the English ladies in an undertone.

"They can't both have had red rings," said the clergyman conclusively.

"Oh, but mine had—indeed, it had!" said Elsie, bursting into tears. "I had it painted on."

She and her sister retired from the *salon* at an hour so early that their retreat deserved the imputation of running away, and, having unpacked their solitary little trunk, Elsie sobbed herself to sleep in one of her sister's nightgowns.

Not even when the other portmanteau was called for the next day, and brought home in triumph from the station, were the Miss Browns' characters thoroughly re-established at the *pension*. There was something said about "hide-and-seek," and many detective stories were recalled, most of them bearing upon strange cases of duplicates being made of boxes and bags by thieves. And the old white-haired clergyman shook his head, and said it was a sad pity.

The only consolation our two young friends had was in choosing their hats for Mary Hume's wedding, and these were so pretty—and at the same time not ruinously expensive—that it was felt that they did, indeed, make up a little for all the horrors that had been endured in the wicked city of Paris. Later on, however, when France had been left behind, and its odious inhabitants forgotten, the Miss Browns' trip may be said to have become a thoroughly enjoyable one in every way.

They visited Schaffhausen, where Emily made a spirited sketch of the waterfall, and some very nice people in the hotel took quite a fancy to Elsie, and asked her to go on expeditions with them when her artistic sister was engaged with her sketch-book.

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They stayed a few days at Schaffhausen, and felt braced and energetic, and fit for any amount of walking. And Emily recorded in her diary that she felt as though she were breathing champagne and walking on indiarubber, so buoyant did her steps become.

The only drawback to this pleasant sojourn was the fact that a young man staying at the hotel developed a somewhat disturbing interest in the younger Miss Brown. Emily had always known that her sister was very pretty, but she had not taken into consideration that this would be a serious disadvantage to two girls travelling alone. Emily almost thought that she ought to write home and tell her mother her anxiety and fears. But she finally decided that such a letter would make so much consternation at home that it were better to say nothing, and only take care to be additionally circumspect in her behaviour. Consequently, when the young man, whose interest in Elsie was painfully apparent, had bestowed many curious glances at her, and had finally seated himself near their small dining-table, Emily requested the head waiter to move her own and her sister's seats to a more distant part of the room. "Nothing," she said sententiously, "can excuse curiosity or familiarity on the part of a fellow-traveller. Why should introductions be dispensed with in Switzerland, and not at Brighton?"

Emily began to wish that both she and her too attractive sister were safely under the protecting wing of Mrs. Hume. Fortunately, their stay at Schaffhausen was not very long, and the inquisitive stranger was left behind when the two unprotected travellers journeyed onwards to Lucerne.

Here Emily's enthusiasm and her pencil were busy enough. She made a few rapid impressionist sketches even at the railway station, and, on leaving the entrancing town, she was so busy recording notes, both literary and artistic, that she found it impossible to condescend to practical details, and kept her eyes upon the beauties of Nature to the exclusion entirely of meaner things. To state the matter briefly, the elder Miss Brown lost her luggage. The hotel porter—a delightful man—who was fortunately at the railway station, thought that the portmanteau *avec la ligne jaune* had not left the hotel. It was certainly not on the station omnibus, and he promised to use every despatch to send it after the travellers; it would probably overtake them not long after their arrival at the Riffelhorn. It was fortunate that Elsie's box contained all that the two girls were likely to require, and the Paris hats, at least, were safe.

The journey to the mountain hotel could be made either on mule-back or on foot.

"It will certainly save money to walk," said Emily. "For my own part, I feel so invigorated by this mountain air that I could spring from rock to rock like a chamois!"

It is needless to remark that the Miss Browns attempted various short cuts on their walk up the mountain-side. Emily was often surprised to find how stupid people were in the way of making a long round when a shorter, if more perpendicular, path could easily be found. They made various pauses also to make sketches, and detours were necessary to find flowers or to see views. It hardly alarmed her or her sister to find that they soon lost sight of their fellow-tourists. Mules undoubtedly travel faster than even the most energetic young ladies, and Switzerland is proverbially safe from any fear of brigands, wild beasts, or even snakes. It was only necessary to use their own common-sense, and they could not fail to reach the hotel safe and sound.

The only contingency for which neither sister had provided was a mountain thunderstorm. But the storm burst, and with it a torrent of rain. The poor shelter afforded by some pine trees hardly protected the two girls at all. The thunder rolled and muttered in the hills, and the lightning flashed in a way that struck terror into Elsie's heart. It was an awful storm. Their straw hats soon lost their shape altogether, and hung miserably about the faces of the two unfortunate girls, and their grey travelling-dresses were soaked through. Emily began to remember, with an awful sinking of heart, that Elsie's chest was weak, and she put her arms round her in a sisterly and very affectionate manner, without, however, being able to do much to shelter the terrified girl.

"Couldn't we try to overtake the mules?" Elsie whispered presently. "I should like to be near someone."

"I don't know what to do," said Emily. "These trees protect us a little, although I do believe that it is supposed to be dangerous to shelter under them in a storm."

"Oh, what a flash that was!" said Elsie, covering her eyes.

"You will get chilled to the bone here," said Emily, in tones of acute distress, "and you know how delicate your chest is! Do

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let us try and push on. If we avoid all curves and go straight upwards, we must arrive there in time."

"I feel safer here," said Elsie. "Oh, do you think they will find our bodies if we are killed?" The gloomy suggestion brought tears to both girls' eyes, and they sobbed in concert for a little while. At last the storm seemed to be dying away. The thunder only muttered sullenly—it had ceased to crackle overhead—and two limp Miss Browns set forth once more to try and find the path to the hotel. A sharp stone cut a hole in Elsie's shoe, and she began to limp painfully, and Emily, who since the storm was over had been busy with mental notes descriptive of the agonies of the situation, awoke suddenly to the fact that she and her sister had completely lost their way.

Without disturbing the tender-hearted reader with any more painful details of the situation, it may be recorded that the sisters wandered on the mountain-side till nightfall, and that just when their strength seemed entirely gone, and they had both written fond messages of farewell to their absent father and mother in Emily's sketch-book, they saw far below them the lights of the hotel.

"Saved, saved!" cried Elsie. Her voice by this time was very hoarse, and she was utterly exhausted by hours of climbing. Both girls stumbled badly in the dark, and Elsie limped painfully in her cut shoe. It was only when the door of the hotel was actually reached that Emily pulled herself together so far as to consider the question of conventionalities. "What will people think of us arriving at such an hour?" she said, for her watch pointed to eleven o'clock, and every window in the hotel, with the exception of the porter's office, was dark with the respectability of an early night's rest. Poor Elsie, however, was too far gone to care for anything but getting her wet dress off and lying down upon her bed. Fortunately, the vigilant porter in his little office in the hall could talk English. In the emergency of the moment, both travellers had forgotten every word of French that they ever knew. They gave their names, and stated that a bedroom had been engaged for them, and that they desired to go there at once.

"We'll get the little stove out," said Emily consolingly to her sister, "and I'll make you a hot cup of tea, and then you must roll yourself up in your dressing-gown, and we can only hope and trust that you have not taken a chill."

The porter intimated that the double-bedded room prepared for the Miss Browns was quite at their service, and that a small portmanteau and the cardboard hat-boxes had already been taken there, as they had directed.

It was almost like the kindly welcome that a return to home and familiar things gives to see the little box with its red circle of paint and the two cardboard hat-boxes upon the bedroom floor. The porter lighted the candles, and apologised for the fact that all the *femmes de chambre* were in bed, and, completely exhausted, the two Miss Browns prepared for rest. The first thing to be done was to unpack the little stove, and this Emily proceeded to do.

"Good Heavens," she exclaimed, as she undid the straps and opened the portmanteau, "this is not your dressing-gown!"

"It doesn't matter," said Elsie, taking off her wet jacket and hanging it over a chair. "Give me anything."

"But I can't think whose it is," said Emily.

"Oh, give me something warm to put on," said her sister. And Emily, feeling as if she were in some strange dream, handed her sister a large and warm wrap.

"Good gracious, it's a man's dressing-gown!" said Elsie, thrusting her arms through the sleeves. "And there's a cigarette case in the pocket!"

"I can't help it," said Emily with a tragic air. "If it belonged to Royalty itself, you would have to take off your wet things and get into something dry and warm. But how did it get there? And where is the stove?"

Moved by a sudden inspiration, Elsie rose from the couch on which she had dropped, and, bringing the candle over nearer to her sister, who was kneeling by the portmanteau, she exclaimed in a hollow voice: "Emily, they are all men's things!"

They examined the trunk carefully. There was a red circle painted upon it. They looked for the label; there was none. The box was not locked; there was nothing to show how or why Elsie's clothes should have been abstracted, and those of a man put in their place. Emily buried her face in her hands. "This is awful!" she said.

"I see a pair of warm bedroom slippers under that square box," said Elsie, recovering a little, "and my foot hurts so horribly. I do believe I'll put them on."

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"Here is a lovely thick shooting-jacket," said Emily. "Dare I?" And she took off her own wringing-wet coat, and drew on the garment of Harris tweed.

"Don't scatter his things about the room," said Elsie. "Put that square box and these socks into the wardrobe, and we can pack them up in the morning."

"I do believe I shall put on one of the pairs of socks," said Emily. "Oh, dear, I feel fearfully improper!"

"I don't know what else we are to do, but it is pretty awful," said Elsie.

"Oh, stop!" cried her sister, overwhelmed with confusion when she saw her feet encased in a pair of large grey socks. "I can't bear these things! I'll steal downstairs and ask the porter if there is no other box for us."

"'Do you give these ladies in charge?'"

"You can't go alone," said Elsie; "let me come with you."

The two girls stole downstairs, only to hear that there was no unclaimed luggage anywhere in the hotel. The porter, however, hearing of the loss of the stove, provided some boiling water and a little jug of milk, and, with the tea which Mrs. Brown had packed in one of the little handbags, a refreshing cup of tea was soon made. The open portmanteau still lay upon the floor. With maidenly decorum, the Miss Browns hardly glanced at it. There seemed to be a shaving-case and shirts. A big, manly pair of boots, which Emily had drawn forth, looked masculine and terrible beside their own little shoes which they had removed from their wet feet.

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"The tea is delicious," said Elsie. "And now we can take off our wet dresses and hang them to dry on the backs of chairs, and we will put them on again and repack everything before we are called in the morning."

She had hardly spoken these hopeful words before a knock was heard at the door, and their friend the porter appeared, in much agitation, while behind him, in a tweed travelling suit and gaiters, was the very last person in the world whom the Miss Browns would have cared to see—the bold stranger who had displayed so much interest in Elsie at Schaffhausen. Fortunately, the wretch did not approach the door, but remained some paces behind the porter in the corridor. He was English, therefore the girls' worst fears were set at rest. Had he been a Frenchman, they know now they would have screamed.

Emily flew to the door to shut it.

"By Jove," she heard the Englishman in the corridor murmur, "she's got on my coat!"

Emily turned the key firmly in the lock.

"I don't want to bother the ladies," a voice was heard saying outside in the corridor, "if they would just shove out my portmanteau."

The porter knocked again. "Would mesdemoiselles allow monsieur to have his clothes?"

"Elsie," said Emily, "this is a nightmare!"

She and her sister hastily resumed their own soaking wet garments, and repacked the dressing-gown and slippers, the masculine and terrifying boots and the socks, strapped the portmanteau hastily together, and then, not daring to look the porter in the face, they pushed it out into the corridor and shut the door again. Having done so, they were too much overcome to speak, but sat and looked blankly at each other with white faces, their wet jackets clinging to them, and their long hair falling about them.

"We must go home to-morrow," said Emily at last. And the tragedy of her voice smote like a knell upon her tender-hearted sister, who instantly burst into tears.

When another knock came to the door, Emily had just decided to barricade their apartment by the aid of a marble-topped washstand and a chest of drawers, when the porter's reassuring voice told the exhausted travellers that their own trunk awaited them on the door-mat outside.

"Shall I bring it in?" said the porter through the keyhole.

"Certainly not," said Emily; "go away this minute." She felt brave behind a locked door, and the discomfited porter withdrew. Then only, when his steps had died away down the polished corridor, did the two sisters step furtively forth and drag in their own dear little box. Oh, how glad they were to see it! It was locked, whereas now they remembered that the other box had not been locked. Why had this not struck them at the time? Oh, the joy of seeing their own dressing-gowns and slippers! And what comfort was ever like their own little Shetland shawls?

It was two o'clock in the morning before they finally composed themselves to rest, and it was not long after seven o'clock before they were again disturbed. Once more it was the voice of the porter, and even in their dreams the girls' hearts sank.

"Go away, go away!" said Emily, when at last she was thoroughly roused. The porter was tapping insistently at the door, and soon the awful words fell upon the ears of the girls: "The manager of the hotel is here, and he must search your room directly."

"What rot! Don't put it like that," said the voice of the Englishman—the dreaded Englishman, whose face they had sworn never to look upon again—the Englishman who had seen Miss Elsie and Miss Emily Brown clad in his own shooting-coat and dressing-gown and slippers and grey socks.

Still the handle of the door continued to be shaken, and there was nothing for it but for the two girls to make a hasty toilet, and presently, with trembling fingers, to undo the fastenings of the door.

"The young ladies' pardon must be asked," said the black-whiskered hotel proprietor, a person of a most alarming countenance, with red lips and what Emily subsequently called a Jewish cast of features. He was very sorry indeed to alarm them, or to make a disturbance, but there had been a diamond robbery in the hotel the night before, and as grave suspicion attached itself to Room No. 219, it would, with or without mesdames' permission, be immediately searched.

The two girls clung together, speechless with indignation, but there was no redress for the horrible indignities to which they were to be submitted. Probably they would next find themselves in prison, and, after that, what was there to live for? The wide world would hardly provide a place secluded enough for them to hide their dishonoured heads.

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Someone cleared his throat loudly at the door. "Would you mind speaking to me a minute?" said the voice of the Englishman. "Look here," he said, "I am sure there has been a mistake. I don't believe I locked my portmanteau, and probably the diamonds were stolen on the way up."

"Your diamonds?" faltered Emily.

"Well, I had charge of them," said the Englishman. "It's a horrid thing to have happened, but I only discovered when I was unpacking this morning that they were gone, so the manager is making a search. But please don't let him disturb you."

"We have given up hoping to be left in peace," said Emily with dignity.

"I am awfully sorry," said the stranger, "but perhaps you wouldn't mind just telling me if you saw a jewel-case when you—you were unpacking my things last night?"

"Of course we didn't!" exclaimed both girls. And Elsie said, raising terrified, tearful blue eyes to the Englishman, whose face at least was kind: "We can't expect you to believe us, and it would take no end of explanation to show that we are not guilty, but really—really and truly we only meant to borrow your things."

"We are quite honest," pleaded Emily; "our father is Colonel Brown."

"We couldn't think of stealing things. If you only knew us—only, of course, you don't—you would know we couldn't steal."

And at that moment the proprietor of the hotel opened the polished wardrobe of the bedroom and drew forth a small square box.

"The diamonds! My wig!" exclaimed the Englishman as he took the box.

"It's the box, perhaps," said the porter—the porter who had seemed to be their friend—"but you had better make sure that the diamonds are inside."

The Englishman opened the jewel-case, and there, on a bed of blue velvet, lay a glittering diamond necklace.

"They hadn't time to get rid of it," said the hotel proprietor. "Monsieur"—turning to the Englishman—"do you give these ladies in charge?"

At this crisis Elsie fainted, and the horde of barbarians retreated from the room which they had invaded, and mercifully sent a *femme de chambre* to the two girls' rescue.

An hour later they left the hotel. Not to put too fine a point on it, the Miss Browns ran away. In the eyes of the hotel proprietor their guilt was established; in the eyes of the hall-porter they were criminals; in the eyes of the Englishman—well, at least he had pretended to accept Emily's faltering, hysterical protestations of innocence. At least, he had said that he would not prosecute, and he had lifted his hat to them as they left the hotel, and had asked them if he could do anything for them, while the eager, prying eyes of the whole of the visitors assembled on the balcony—among whom the story of the stolen diamonds had spread like wild-fire—looked with cold, suspicious eyes at the retreating figures of the two Miss Browns.

Positively they were afraid to go home—that was really the reason why they decided to push on to Pontresina—and two miserable girls pursued their onward journey. Oh, to be under the motherly protection of Mrs. Hume! Oh, to be respectable once more! They sat dry-eyed and wretched through the train journey to Chur, and the long drive in the diligence to Pontresina, and only when Mrs. Hume's hospitable doors were reached did they really break down. The meeting was one of fervent embraces and hysterical tears. Mrs. Hume, at first distracted, afterwards administered what consolation she could, and told the girls with motherly kindness that, if they had done nothing wrong, they had nothing to be ashamed of.

"*If!*" sobbed Emily. "Oh, Mrs. Hume, even you!"

Mrs. Hume protested her absolute belief in Emily's blameless character, and she found time to comfort and to console the sisters even in the midst of her manifold preparations for Mary's wedding. There were to be several guests staying in their own little villa, besides a number of others at the various hotels in the place, and as there was much coming and going, Mrs. Hume's hands were indeed full. Under her kindly influence, the girls' shattered nerves and outraged feelings were comparatively restored, and they made their kind friend promise that they might remain with her until she could herself take them home. Elsie's cheeks had begun to regain their bloom, and Emily had begun to resume the writing of her diary, when another terrible shock befell them.

This was nothing less than the arrival at Mrs. Hume's own villa of the Englishman whose diamond necklace they had stolen. The shock was felt to be all the keener from the fact that both Miss Browns were so pitifully unprepared for it. All their troubles seemed to have passed over, and were already only remembered as some

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terrible nightmare, yet here, only a week after the famous diamond robbery, the owner of the jewels was among them as a fellow-guest.

It was the very night before Mary Hume's wedding. The Miss Browns had gone to dress for dinner, and Mary Hume had popped in her head to tell them to be sure and put on their best dresses, for Sir Hercules Smith's cousin, Charlie Herbert, had arrived, and Charlie was to be best man, and Charlie was the most amiable and delightful creature, except Hercules, who had ever lived.

It was with the pleasantest anticipations that the two sisters entered Mrs. Hume's drawing-room, with its pitch-pine ceilings and doors, and its pretty chintzes and curtains, all in gala trim for the wedding. Good Mrs. Hume introduced her guest to both girls, and the next moment dinner was announced, and he went in to dinner with Mrs. Hume on his arm.

And all through that awful dinner, Elsie and Emily, unable to swallow a mouthful of food, had to sit in the same room and at the same table with the man whose clothing they had actually worn, by whom they had been discovered in male attire at midnight, and whose diamond necklace they had stolen. The man himself seemed utterly unconcerned by what had occurred. Indeed, a more cheerful guest had surely never been seen. Peals of laughter could be heard from his end of the table as the dinner proceeded, and the Miss Browns were thankful to realise that no notice was likely to be taken of their silence or of their want of appetite. Mrs. Hume herself had never appeared in gayer spirits, and when she returned with the other ladies to the drawing-room, it is painful to have to relate that her good taste and good feeling so far deserted her as to allow her to make various hints and gibes at the girls' awful predicament in the Riffelhorn hotel, and to tease them with positive cruelty about the hotel robbery. There seemed to be no peace for Elsie and Emily Brown.

Presently the gentlemen returned to the drawing-room, all except Mr. Charles Herbert, who followed a few minutes later, carrying a small square box in his hand.

"This," he said to Mary Hume, "is the present which my uncle sent out to you in my charge. He impressed upon me all along that I was a careless wretch, and would be sure to lose it, but even he never dreamed that it would be twice stolen and twice recovered."

"Once at the Gare du Nord?" faltered Emily.

"Once at the Riffelhorn?" said Elsie in a trembling voice.

"I am never going to take charge of anything valuable again," said Charles Herbert, laughing.

"How could one ever dream," said Mrs. Hume, "that you would both hit upon the same device for recognising your portmanteaux?"

"I should never have troubled to have anything painted on mine at all," said Mr. Herbert, "had it not been for those diamonds which I had charge of—I was so desperately afraid that some other chap might mistake my portmanteau for his."

"I entreated Elsie to have a yellow stripe," said Emily.

* * * * *

Even after all explanations had been made, Mrs. Hume protested that the girls must remain with her for some weeks longer, and that then they should all travel home together. By a curious coincidence, Mr. Charles Herbert also elected to stay on a little longer, and later, when Elsie protested that he could not possibly think of marrying a hotel thief, Mr. Herbert was able to bring a conclusive argument to bear upon the case. He pointed out that, if she would marry him, their two portmanteaux might remain as they were, with a red ring painted on each, and that no further mistake could possibly be made, as he and she would travel together in future.

To such an argument, Elsie, it is believed, was unable to find any valid or convincing objection.

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A GAMBLE IN LOVE.

By FRED M. WHITE.

IF Lord Rupert Tintagel had not put into the harbour of Minchin, the true story of Montague Disney would probably never have been written. Disney says himself that he could not have held out much longer, and that he was fed up with it, which, being translated into the English of his clan, means a dark hint to the effect that he would have blown his brains out. And when you come to hear what happened to him, you will be inclined to extend to him a certain measure of sympathy. As a matter of fact, the port that Tintagel put into was not really called Minchin, neither was his patronymic Tintagel. For the matter of that, the Right Hon. Sir Eben Aza, with half the alphabet after his name, is a *nom de plume* also. One has to tread lightly in these troublous political times, especially in view of the fact that the Right Hon. Sir Eben Aza was, and *is*, a pillar of a great political party, and an Empire builder of the first rank.

Now, Tintagel put into Minchin for the sole purpose of procuring a certain herb, without which the "morning glory" cocktail is a delusion and a vain thing. The herb in question can only be obtained in its virgin sweetness from the mountains behind Minchin, and this important truth had been impressed upon Tintagel by his friend, Bill Venables, who had come out yachting in those seas on the distinct understanding that he wasn't expected to rough it.

"Not that I can't," he said. "But hang me if I see any reason for being put on rations when there's no occasion for it. If you're out for a scrap, then you can count me in it. But this is a pleasure cruise, and I'm not hankering for anything picturesque in the way of Oriental surgery."

So the *White Woman* put into Minchin, and the lamentable hiatus was duly filled. As most people know, Minchin is a town containing nearly a million souls, and boasts the most cosmopolitan population in the world. It is a delightful, beautiful, utterly wicked and alluring city, as Venables knew; and as Tintagel had never been here before, it was only natural that he should suggest a round of sight-seeing. For the next day or two there was no break in the flow of Tintagel's education, and by the end of the week his clean mind began to hanker for the pure atmosphere of the sea — a little Minchin goes a long way.

"Don't you think that we'd better chuck it?" he suggested.

"There's one more place you've got to see," Venables said. "Now, we're simply bound to look in for an hour or two at Sin-Li's. In a way, it's as good as Monte Carlo."

Tintagel was fain to admit that he had forgotten Sin-Li. Every traveller in the East knew the place by repute, and many thousands of them had visited the shrine. That most of them bitterly regretted the visit afterwards does not in the least matter. It was useless to complain that the odds in favour of the bank were sinfully long. It was also childish to say that Sin-Li was making the income of a Queen of Sheba, and to contend that the authorities ought to interfere. The fact remained that Sin-Li was making that princely income, and the authorities did *not* interfere. No doubt Sin-Li could have explained their exquisite politeness so far as he was concerned.

The Casino, so called, was situated in the Chinese quarter. It was a long, low building, cunningly surrounded with an air of mystery, and impossible of admission without the token and the password and all the rest of it. There were secret passages and hidden doors and villainous-looking janitors, all calculated to thrill the traveller and fill him with the wine of adventure. It never occurred to him, in his bland innocence, that Sin-Li's tokens might be obtained from any loafer along the beach. The little game was to impress every traveller with the pleasing delusion that he himself was exceptionally favoured, and cause him to be swindled out of his money joyously and without complaint.

Therefore it was on a Saturday evening that Tintagel and Venables found themselves in the big room, where a form of roulette was being played. Down both sides of the

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table twenty or more people were seated. They represented every nationality under the sun. Taking out some half-dozen of them, it might have been fairly assumed that there was not an honest sixpence in the room. But Sin-Li was too wily a bird to judge by appearance, and many a battered-looking wayfarer there had left the nucleus of an income in the Chinaman's pocket.

"Pretty thick lot," Tintagel whispered.

"Oh, they've got the rocks, all right," Venables muttered in reply. "Look at that chap yonder in the blue overalls. He hasn't been washed for a week, but his pockets are full of dust, all the same. And that little Jew opposite—you wouldn't think he's one of the biggest bill-discounters in Europe. But look here—we shall have to have a dash, you know. Sin-Li's got no use for mere spectators. Put your money down."

Tintagel carelessly covered a number with a few sovereigns. It was a matter of indifference to him whether he won or lost. He did not doubt for a moment that the roulette wheel had been the subject of some ingenious mechanical manipulation. He was more concerned with the hebdomadal crowd about him. At the top of the table, raised above the floor, sat the cashier, who seemed to combine that duty with that of a croupier. His long, thin hands extended through the bars of a veritable cage, wherein he sat like a dangerous animal that it was necessary to keep from contact with the gamblers. He paid the winners and collected the losses of the losers by means of an expanding rake capable of reaching to the far end of the table. On the little desk in front of him lay a pile of notes and gold. With his dead-white face and bald head, with his absolutely expressionless eyes, he reminded Tintagel unpleasantly of a trained ape rather than a human being. The man appeared to be devoid of emotion of any kind; his mask-like face was as blank as that of a statue.

"Is the chap dangerous?" Tintagel asked.

"No, but the gamblers are sometimes," Venables said drily. "This place has been raided by desperadoes more than once, but Sin-Li doesn't mind that much, because it is an advertisement for the house. Sometimes the police come here, but it's only a dress rehearsal, after all. At the first sign of trouble, the lights go out and the cashier lowers himself into a sort of vault down below. He's in a kind of lift, as you see for yourself. If a revolver appears, he presses a button, and he's not there any more."

Tintagel was barely listening. The white-faced man in the cage fairly fascinated him. He paid no heed to the fact that his third venture at the table had won him a small stake, and then on his little pile of sovereigns the man in the cage had deposited a clean, crisp Bank of England note. The face of the note was folded inward, but it was impossible to doubt what it really was. Venables brought his elbow sharply into Tintagel's ribs.

"Don't you want that fiver?" he asked. "That little Kanaka boy in the canary-coloured waistcoat will nick it to a certainty if you don't pick it up. Don't scatter it, my boy. If you get a reputation of that sort, you may find a knife in your ribs before morning. Pick it up, you ass!"

Tintagel pulled himself back to the affairs of the moment. He reached out for his gold and paper with the intention of cramming them carelessly into his pocket. His glance fell upon the clean white bank-note, then his teeth came together with a snap. Just for an instant there was a startled look in his eyes as he folded the note and deposited it with more than usual care in his cigarette case. Venables smiled at the action.

"Keeping it as a souvenir?" he asked.

"You can put it that way, if you like," Tintagel replied.

He turned away, as if still deeply interested in what was going on around him. But the only really fascinating thing there was the man in the iron cage. He seemed to see everything without looking; he appeared to do everything like one in a dream. Every now and again he swept the table with his almond-shaped eyes—eyes that had no vision in them, or so it seemed. The atmosphere was getting oppressive—a longing for fresh air came over Tintagel. He turned eagerly to Venables.

"Let's get out of this," he said. "It's pretty vulgar and commonplace, after all. I've had far more fun than this at San Francisco. What do you say to a supper at Pinsuti's, on the balcony?"

"And some of those little green oysters done in cream," Venables suggested. "You can count me in."

They sat presently on the flower-decked balcony in front of Pinsuti's, lingering over their coffee and cigarettes. It was a glorious, scented night, with a great moon like a silver shield hanging in the blue, and a powder of diamond-pointed stars gemming the heavens. At their feet lay the city, picked out with a thousand points of orange-coloured flame.

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"He sat like a dangerous animal that it was necessary to keep from contact with the gamblers."

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It was a night to sit silent and at peace with all mankind. But Tintagel was restless and moody, so that the easy-going Bill noticed it at last.

"Not feeling up to the mark, old chap?" he asked.

"Oh, I'm all right," Tintagel replied. "I was thinking. Did you ever hear the story of poor old Montague Disney, and his strange disappearance from London three years ago?"

"Oh, nothing but club gossip. I was away shooting in the Rockies at the time. I never knew much of Disney, but he always struck me as being a particularly good sort. A fine sportsman, too. Not the sort of chap you'd expect to commit forgery, and all that kind of thing. Didn't he rob the West Asian Bank of a lot of money? Had a post of trust there, hadn't he?"

"Well, that's what they said," Tintagel went on. "One fine morning Disney suddenly vanished, and from that day to this no soul has ever seen or heard of him. His father, old Sir Thomas Disney, was terribly cut up about it. He always swore there was a misunderstanding somewhere. But the money was gone, and Disney was gone, too, and there was no other conclusion to come to. The Right Hon. Eben of that ilk was chairman of the bank, and he did his best to hush the thing up. I understand the old man behaved very well, especially seeing that he was not at all on good terms with Disney. You see, Disney and Beatrice Aza——"

"Oh, I remember now," Venables interrupted. "Lady Frances Aza told me something about it. Weren't Disney and the girl secretly engaged, or something of the sort? I know that Lady Frances liked him, but old Eben had a German Prince up his sleeve for the girl."

Tintagel rose from his seat and began to walk up and down the balcony.

"There's something infernally wrong about the whole business," he said, "and, so far as I'm concerned, I should like to hear Disney's side of the story."

"You'll never do that," Venables muttered.

"Now, there, my dear chap, is where you're wrong. I'm going to hear Disney's story if I stay here a month to get it."

"Do you mean to say he's here?" Venables demanded.

Tintagel came back to the little table with the shaded lights, and laid his cigarette case on the cloth. He took from it the folded bank-note and handed it to his companion.

"Your winnings." Venables smiled. "Is there any particular virtue about that fiver?"

"Turn it on its back," Tintagel said curtly, "and tell me what you think of what you find there."

Venables fairly started as he looked at the paper.

"It reads like a message," he said. "'*If you have any spark of the old friendship left, for Heaven's sake get me out of this. Prisoner. Caution. Dangerous.*' Now, what on earth does it all mean, Rupert? Do you mean to say that Disney——"

"Wrote that message on the back of the note," Tintagel said firmly. "My old pal, and the one-time lover of Beatrice Aza, is the poor devil in the cage at Sin-Li's. There can be no question about it. And now what are we going to do?"

"It seems incredible. Why, the man in the cage looked a Mongol to the life! It can't be Disney."

"I'm equally convinced that it is, Bill. He's been cleverly made up for the part, and he's a prisoner, too, if that message means anything. I wonder how long the poor wretch has been there? Just think of his agony of mind, waiting day by day and month by month for the sight of a friendly face and the chance of communicating with the owner of it! We've got to get Disney out of this, my boy. There's an ugly story behind it all, and I'm going to get to the bottom of it, or perish in the attempt. I need not ask if I can count upon you, Bill."

Venables smiled. It was the kind of invitation that specially appealed to him.

"Oh, rather!" he said. "But how are we going to work it, old son? We can easily kick up a diversion in the gambling saloon, but that chap's in a cage for all the world like a captive tiger."

"We shall have to try and communicate with Disney in some way. I don't see why we shouldn't send him a message in the same way as I got mine. If we go back there, he will be certain to know that we have returned for the purpose of giving him a hand. How long does the gambling go on?"

"My dear chap, practically it never stops. I believe at three o'clock in the morning, for a couple of hours, things are slack. Now, the best thing we can do is to sit down and write a brief list of questions on another bank-note, so that we can get Disney to answer them. He'll tumble at once to what's going on, and he'll take precious good care that you back one winning number, at any rate. When shall we start?"

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"Why not now?" Tintagel asked.

An hour later and the two were back in the saloon again. The plot called for caution, and Tintagel lost three mains running before he ventured to put the bank-note on the number he was backing. A weary half-hour passed, then the rake shot down the table, and Tintagel eagerly grabbed at the piece of paper. There were but a few words scribbled on it, but they sufficed—

"*Make a disturbance*—the message ran—*both stand close to cage. When lights go out, jump on top.*"

Venables nodded approvingly as Tintagel whispered the words in his ear. To stroll to the top of the table was an easy matter and devoid of suspicion, but to get up an altercation was a different thing altogether. An inspiration came to Venables. He turned and caught the eye of the man in the cage for an instant. His lips framed a word or two, the left eye of the man in the cage drooped slightly, and then deliberately the rake placed a pile of gold on a wrong number. Instantly the hairy claw of a pirate in a red cap reached for it, only to meet the fingers of a gaudy Malay, who was, in truth, the rightful owner. Like a flash, the whole room rose in confusion. A sea of angry faces was turned in the direction of strife. A knife flashed out, there was the quick crack of a pistol-shot, and instantly the place was in darkness.

Not a moment did Tintagel and Venables hesitate; they reached for the cage, and climbed like cats to the top. The cage gave a convulsive jerk, and, as they sank into the unknown, they could hear the tornado of cries and yells. Revolvers were being used freely now.

"I guess those chaps will be busy for a bit," Tintagel said, as the cage stopped with a jerk. "This looks like our opportunity. For Heaven's sake, light a match!"

The little spot of flame flared out in the gloom and fell on the face of the man in the cage. He was striving with all his strength to force back the grating.

"Give me a hand!" he whispered hoarsely. "Pull at the third bar. This infernal thing opens from the outside."

Tintagel needed no further bidding. He laid his hand on the bar and wrenched the door of the cage open. The man inside fairly tumbled into his arms. Overhead the hideous din was still going on.

"Now, then, wake up, old man!" Venables cried. "This glorious chance can't last much longer. I suppose that rascal Sin-Li and all his gang are upstairs by this time. The question is, do you know the way out? It's no use asking for trouble. Do try and pull yourself together, Disney."

Disney checked a sob in his throat.

"I'll try," he whispered. "I'm just a bit dazed by this good fortune of mine. I can't tell you how good it is of you to come and help a poor devil——"

"Oh, forget it!" Tintagel snapped. "Do you know the way out, or not? And shall we manage to get into the street without appearing unduly offensive?"

"I know the way," Disney explained. "We shall have to fight, though. Sin-Li's not the man to keep all his eggs in one basket. If we had a revolver amongst us——"

By way of reply, Tintagel pressed a neat little Webley into his hand. Disney reached for a switch, and instantly the narrow passages were flooded with light.

"This way," he said. "Come quickly."

They emerged presently into a wide corridor, where two coolies lay on a mat smoking. Before they could rise, Venables had dashed forward. He caught each by the nape of the neck, and brought their heads together with a smash. A snore from one, a kind of whine from the other, and the figures lay there as if asleep. At the top of a flight of stairs a Chinaman strutted. As he looked down and opened his mouth to give the alarm, Tintagel fired. The man threw up his arms and rolled down the steps. It was no time to stop and inquire what had happened to the Chinaman, for here was the door leading to the street, and safety was beyond. The lock gave at the third revolver shot, the door fell back, and the sweet, cool night breeze came refreshingly to a trio of heated foreheads.

"My word, it's like Heaven!" Disney said. "But what are you fellows going to do with me? I couldn't show up at any decent hotel in this plight; and even if I did, Sin-Li would have me in his clutches before night. The police? They are all in his pay. If I could find a hiding-place——"

"I've got the yacht here," Tintagel exclaimed. "I came on shore with Venables in the dinghy, and she's now tied up at the wharf. As they will all have turned in by this time, it won't be a difficult matter to smuggle you on board. Then you can have a bath, and we'll fit you up in some Christian clothes. By this time to-morrow we shall be far enough away from Minchin."

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An hour or so later, Disney emerged from his cabin, clothed and in his right mind. It was not till he had supped and drank some champagne that he began to talk.

"Well, it's a long tale," he said, "and perhaps you'd better let me tell it in my own way. I'm not used to sympathy and kindness, and, when I think what you chaps have done for me, I am inclined to feel a bit hysterical. Now, don't you run away with the impression that I was hiding in that devil's parlour where you found me, because I wasn't—I was a prisoner there. Neither did I run away from England when that money disappeared, because I didn't. I was sent here on a secret mission by Sir Eben Aza, and no one was to know what had become of me. Now, tell me, how is that moon-faced son of a Pathan getting on?"

"Still high in the councils of the nation," Tintagel said drily—"still one of the pillars of his party. But you must not sit there uttering libels against so distinguished a philanthropist as the Honourable Eben."

"A greater rascal never drew the breath of life!" Disney said vehemently. "Oh, I know he's as rich as Crœsus, I know he's the respected chairman of a dozen prosperous companies, and I also know where he started the nucleus of his fortune, and from whence he derives a princely income to-day. Sin-Li is only a paid servant—a mere blind. The owner of the place we've just left is Sir Eben Aza, and I can put my hand on three men who remember him when he first started.

"Now, I found this out three years ago. I was always fond of fiction, and I used to go pottering about down Shadwell way, getting local colour from the sailor scum from all over the world. And that's the way I tumbled upon the story of Eben Aza's early history. When he tried to prevent me from marrying his daughter, I was fool enough to tell him what I knew. I admit it wasn't playing the game exactly, and if I did wrong, Heaven knows I have suffered for it. The old blackguard behaved all right at the time—at any rate, he thoroughly deceived me. Fancy that man being the husband of Lady Frances and the father of such a girl as Beatrice! Well, he laid a pretty trap for me, and I walked into it with my eyes open. When I realised the truth, I was stranded here absolutely penniless, my good name was utterly gone, and no one would have believed my story. What was the good of going back to a certain term of penal servitude? At any rate, I would spare the old people that indignity. I suppose I lost my nerve—anyway, I sank till I was literally starving. One of Sin-Li's blackguards gave me a meal one night and a drink, and when I came to my senses, I was in that den, where I have remained all these years. And Sin-Li had the audacity to tell me that he kept me there because I was the only cashier he could ever trust with money. Just think of the irony of it! There I was, day by day, hoping against hope, and praying for some friendly face under the lights of the tables! It was that hope alone that saved my reason. Then at length you two good fellows came along, and I took my chances. If I could once get away from that den, my idea was to make my way back to England and tell my father everything. I've got a weapon in my hand now, and every word I say I can prove to be true. Heaven knows I have suffered enough, but it isn't vengeance I want. For the sake of the girl I love, and who loved me, I am prepared to keep her father's shameful secret. But he must wash his hands of that gambling den, and he must give my good name back to me. And that's about all. I needn't insult two real good fellows like yourselves by suggesting that this is a sacred matter between us, because it would be merely wasting my breath to do so. All I ask you to do is to lend me a bit to go on with, and land me at some port from whence I can get a quick passage home. And I won't try and thank you, for, when I think of your kindness to me, it makes my eyes feel queer and—oh, dash it, you chaps know what I mean!"

* * * * *

It was six months later, and the *White Woman* was sunning herself off Corfu, and Venables and Tintagel were sprawling on the deck to the accompaniment of post-prandial cigarettes and coffee plus some recent newspapers. A queer little chuckle broke from Tintagel's lips, and Venables looked up inquiringly.

"Anything special in the paper?" he asked.

"Well, what do you think of this?" Tintagel responded. "Give me your ears. 'An engagement has been announced, and a marriage will shortly take place between Miss Beatrice Aza, only child of Lady Frances and the Right Hon. Sir Eben Aza, of 725, Grosvenor Square, and Marion Castle, Bucks, and Mr. Montague Disney, son of Sir Thomas Disney, of Tower House, Devon.' What do you think of that, my friend?"

"Then *that's* all right," Venables said lazily.

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THE VALUE OF A RUN.

By J. E. RAPHAEL.

IT is the tritest of trite observations that the total score of an innings at cricket is made up of individual runs. In actual practice, however, while an innings is in progress, there are few people, I imagine, who consider the matter in the light of this obvious truth. This is a pity, for if the value of each individual run were appreciated more fully and more generally at the time, it would, without doubt, effect a great improvement in the standard of play—in fielding, more particularly. Quite apart from the thorny problem of missed catches, I have never discovered any adequate reason why a team that only by courtesy could be described as *weak medium* in other respects, should not be practically first class in the field. They cannot, perhaps, hope to have players who will be comparable to a Brownlee, a Jessop, or a Gregory, but, in this instance, they can by thought add a cubit to their stature.

How different would have been the result of many close finishes if one or two possibly trivial cases of misfielding had not disfigured some stage of the game! It would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that all such matches have suffered in this way. One rather curious instance of my school-boy days is worth recalling. It was an exciting ending from every point of view. With three wickets to fall, our opponents had only six runs to get. We dismissed two of them, but the last man in, on the stroke of time, made what was thought to be the winning hit. Stumps were pulled up, and we returned to the pavilion. On our way there, a mistake of one was discovered in the score. A tie under such circumstances would have been a wretched and unsatisfactory ending, and, as there was still enough light, we offered to play it out. Fortune rewarded us, for the last man was clean bowled immediately after the game was resumed. Once more we retired, this time under the impression that neither side could claim a victory. The Fates, however, were with us that day. It was, indeed, a pleasant surprise to hear that a further error in the addition had come to light, and that the final checking showed a win for our side by one run. Now, as that match went, our opponents had only themselves to blame for their defeat. For a time things went very badly with our batting, but the effect of a few stolen runs seemed temporarily to demoralise the fieldsmen. They gave us hereabouts quite twenty runs by wild returns at the wicket and faulty ground fielding. One scoring shot I made was especially gratuitous; it was a very foolish call on my part. Mid-on had simply to wait for the ball—it was travelling quite fast to him—field it with both hands, toss it gently to the bowler, and I should have been run out. Instead, he made a wild, single-handed dive, missed the ball altogether, and we made a couple of runs. In the light of subsequent events, that two made all the difference.

In 1894 Surrey and Lancashire played a sensational tie game at the Oval. I was a small boy at the time, and arrived with a packet of sandwiches, a bottle of stone ginger-beer, a quantity of some particularly loathsome form of stickjaw, a pencil, and a scoring sheet. I remember arriving at the Oval long before the gates were open. Surrey won the toss, and, against the bowling of Briggs and Mold, fared badly on a treacherous wicket. Street was the only man on the Surrey side to do any good, and one of his runs was obtained under rather unusual circumstances. Briggs was bowling, and the late G. R. Bardswell, a great Oxford University cricketer, was in the slips.

A snick from Street went to Bardswell, who, evidently under the impression that he had made a catch, swept the ball high into the air. It fell somewhere by mid-on. Street, however, took a different view of what had happened, and, beckoning to his partner while nobody was troubling about the ball, dashed across to the bowler's end. Lancashire naturally appealed, but the umpire decided in the batsman's favour, and Surrey's score was increased. Again, in the light of subsequent events, that single run

made all the difference. I believe that one great reason why we see so much atrociously bad fielding is that many people seem to look on this branch of the game rather as a necessary evil which has to be performed than something from which they can derive not only exercise, but the greatest pleasure and enjoyment.

Everyone is keen on batting, very few refuse to bowl when they have the opportunity; one rarely hears of slack batting or lazy bowling, whilst the reproach is too often justifiably levelled against fielding. In practice, too, it is the same. Here batting invariably takes pride of place; men don't mind bowling — till they've had a knock —but how often does one come across even an attempt at fielding practice? Personally, I have always considered that it takes ever so much longer to get into fielding form than to reach the same condition in the other departments. One's hands, for instance, do not get used so quickly to stopping a hard ball as to the grip of a bat. At the beginning of a season the throwing muscles do not respond in the way one would like them to; there is usually an instinctive tendency to "snap" at the ball instead of letting it come cleanly and surely into one's grasp, and, further, accurate timing is a more difficult achievement. At the risk of a slight digression, I would emphasise the fact that timing is just as, if not more, essential to good fielding as it is to a well-played innings. If you do not watch the ball right from the bowler's hand, and do not acquire the habit of hitting it at the precise fraction of a second when eye, shoulders, body, wrist, and balance are in unison for the particular shot, you may make runs on occasions, but you will never excel as a batsman. In the same way, unless you watch the ball right into your hands, and unless you pick it up at just that point in its journey where, if necessary, it can be returned to the wickets with the greatest expedition and the least delay, you may merit the compliment of being a keen fieldsman, but you will not be a "first flighter." Strictly speaking, I suppose, timing is the consummation of the second

Photo by] [*Hawkins, Brighton.*

MR. J. E. RAPHAEL.

precept, but on the principle that the cart is comparatively useless without the horse in front of it, I prefer to give the term a wider significance so as to embrace the two. Those who have seen Hirst at mid-off quietly pick up, as if it had merely been rolling gently towards him, some terrific off-drive that appeared to have sufficient force behind it almost to go through *his* sturdy hands, will realise what can be done by watching the ball. Where the ground is rough, and where the nasty red creature comes bouncing or shooting from bump to bump, instead of running nicely along the "carpet," the greatest performer in the world may well be excused a mistake. It is under such circumstances, however, that your genius will shine. The indifferent player will probably bend down, put out a hand yards from where the ball is likely to come, put back his head, shut his eyes, and pray that an unlucky "kick" will not cause him to receive a blow in a vulnerable part. When the sad catastrophe happens, an unsympathetic comment that it was his own fault will make him very angry, but it would be the truth. Let us consider how the good man would act. He will have noticed how the ball is coming; he knows that a hard mass hurts his palms far less than, say, his chin or his stomach. His hands only must, therefore, come in contact with the ball. To ensure this happening, he will instruct his eyes to telephone what is taking place more speedily than ever, and as the receiver would be off, if they are shut or his head be up, he will see that the latter is in its place. The natural result of all this is that, if the ball rise, his hands will have been told in time to rise in its direction, and vice versa. As he throws it in, it will appear to have been a marvellous bit of work, whereas in truth almost anybody could have done it who had learnt the art of timing.

It is obvious that thoroughly to enjoy fielding, not only must an interest be taken in it, but there must be no slacking, however temporary its duration. Now, to tell the honest truth, some players always, and all players sometimes, suffer from both maladies. Who of those who have fielded out all day, while the other side are playing "keeps" on a perfect wicket, has not listened to the insidious whisperings of other things? Who, under such circumstances, has not been positive that the clock has stopped during the half-hour before lunch? Who has not poured down the opposite to blessings on the heads of the scoundrels and worse-than-Inquisition torturers who suggest there should be no tea interval, or who has not wondered how the last hour of the day will be got through? When one realises that these sentiments have been entertained at various times by no means vicious folk, one feels that even a palliative would be useful. To regain the normal, or, in other words, once more to get enjoyment out of fielding, concentration is necessary. And here the due appreciation of the value of a run again comes in. Concentration on an abstraction is difficult, but on a definite objective it is comparative child's play. A side that concentrates on the prevention of each individual run can never have a dull moment. Think of all the backing up alone that it entails; think of all the "intelligent anticipation" of strokes that goes on! I venture to suggest that the great Australian fielding combinations, whose prowess has delighted opponents and spectators alike, enjoy to the full their outings in the field. They never seem to be weary, and however many runs you make against them, you always know that you've earned every one of them. The team that gives nothing away is hard to beat.

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DARWIN ISLAND.

By DESMOND COKE,

Author of "The Bending of a Twig," "Beauty for Ashes," "Wilson's," "The Comedy of Age," etc.

HAVE always been sorry about Brand.

He meant well, and he ended badly, which is never anything but tragic.

The first hint I got of his good intentions was gained one day when we were walking down a little byway of the Strand. We came upon one of those old-fashioned organs that have monkeys on the top, and I seized the occasion to enlarge upon the alien peril—a very favourite topic, I may say, of mine, on which I hold some strong and seasoned views.

"Pah!" I said, as we went by, because I make a duty of it. Brand, on the contrary, gave the man some coppers.

I walked on in silence for a little, naturally expecting some explanation of this extraordinary and unpatriotic action, when suddenly my poor friend halted.

"I *must*," he said almost to himself, and turned.

Puzzled, but with a faint hope that some British blood had stirred in him and moved him to demand his money back, I waited to observe the sequel. There was much gesticulation from the alien, whilst Brand's tone seemed now wheedling and now full of threats. The interview was an enigma, though a stormy one. Presently, however, there were obvious signs of an agreement; but just as I looked forward to my friend's vindication, he put his hand into his pocket, drew out what I knew to be his sovereign purse, and showed every sign that it was *he* who would pay as a result of this amazing colloquy. Very suspiciously the alien took whatever the sum was, and then, before my astounded eyes, unloosed a grimy chain and, with no sign of regret, handed his moth-eaten monkey over to my deluded friend as though it had been a mere pound of biscuits. Brand, on the contrary, took it to his coat front with a gentleness which I always observed in his perplexing nature.

I must confess that as he came towards me—who always wear a top-hat when in the West, South-West, or West-Central districts—my first thought was of flight. Then, rightly or wrongly, I reflected that this man, though he held a preposterous and inappropriate creature in his arms, had not merely been my school-fellow, but was the godfather of my only sister's little girl, and the bonds of patriotism and kinship triumphed. I stood firm and waited for him.

"What on earth is that for?" I could not help asking, and in my justifiable excitement I very nearly began "whatever"—a vulgarism to which I especially object.

"Sorry, old man!" he replied. "I never do it, as a rule, except when I'm alone."

"Do what," I asked, adding with what I admit I intended to be ironical rebuke—"buy monkeys?"

"Yes," answered my poor friend quite simply. And he fondled the fly-blown-looking monster as though it had been something human, pressing his cheek against its domed forehead till it bit his chin; and even then he did not do what I confess I should have done. "Poor little devil!" he said. "No wonder it does not trust man!" and held it rather lower on his chest.

I walked along in silence and digust.

"Look here, old boy," the poor fellow said after a while, "I can see that you regard me as ridiculous!" (I paraphrase his always flippant way of speech.) "Let me explain. When I was a little kiddie, we—I and my sister—we had hairy monkeys—no dolls or golliwogs, or any modern rubbish of that sort, but splendid things with real fur and a button for their eyes, and little bits of leather as their ears. Mine was Tommy, hers Sally; and mine was white at first, but hers was always black. We loved those monkeys as if they had been alive. We slept with them beside us, and when our mother took them from us because we and they were too old, I know we wept for hours together. Well, that

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made me love monkeys. I know this poor little devil here is ugly and vicious and all that—not a bit like Tommy—but I can't help that. I think I've got an ideal monkey treasured up for me, just like Plato and those old Greek Johnnies."

"My dear fellow!" I protested, for this was really too absurd, and I remember nothing about monkeys in my Plato.

"Well, anyhow," went on Brand, opening his coat to shelter the monkey, which now stopped shivering and began to scratch, "as a child, for Tommy's sake, I never could bear the sight of monkeys upon organs, cold and hungry and teased by disgusting little children." (These are his own words—I remember them.) "I always longed to let them go, and now—now that I've made some money, I am doing it."

"But where?" I asked in my astonishment.

He lowered his voice mysteriously, and I began to have doubts even then about his sanity.

"Look here," he said, "don't tell anyone. *I've* not till now, but, of course, it is bound to get about before I can carry out my scheme."

"Your scheme? But what?"

He gazed up and down the street. "When I've got enough of them," he said with sudden cunning, "nearly all of them, do you think I shall be fool enough to let them go on Clapham Common, and have all the Italians of London going out to hunt them? No, not I! I'm making inquiries now at the British Museum as to where they come from—Brazil, I think, isn't it?—and when I know, and am ready, I shall take them there in cages and let them dash away into the jungle; and as I see them shinning up the mango trees or throwing cocoanuts, free once again, I shall feel that I've raised the proper monument at last to Tommy and to my dear sister, who died before she came of age. I always think she pined for Sally."

Poor Brand! He spoke so sadly and held the dirty alien thing so lovingly, as he looked out along the street with dim, dreamy eyes, that I could not help feeling the sympathy one has for madmen. None the less, for the sake of the family, I felt it my duty to throw cold water on this foolish scheme.

"Bah," I exclaimed, "they'll be worse off out there! They're British bred. They are not made to fight for their own food. They'll die without their flannel jackets. Any fool knows that, if you release a tame animal among the wild of its own species, they will turn upon it."

"No?" He stopped dead, his face full of dismay, and for a moment I quite hoped that I had cured him of his insane design. But then he grew more cheery and moved on again. "Very well, then"—and his tones showed a new resolve—"it shall be an island without any wild ones, and I'll stay there for a bit myself and feed the poor beggars till they learn the business, and, if essential, keep their little jackets in repair."

After that I saw less of Brand. Argument was plainly useless, and, if only as a business duty, one must be particular about one's friends.

I heard of him, however, often.

Brand's purchases, I fancy, grew more frequent, and, in any case, began to attract the neighbours' notice; whilst his house, big as it was for him—he had never married—must soon have become overcrowded, and the weaker monkeys forced towards the window. Whatever the cause, rumour got to work. Crowds of small boys, I was told, stood around the house in hopes of something happening. They came to refer to my poor friend in the open street as "Monkey" Brand. He could not leave his house without some rapscallion, in feigned panic, announcing that one of the monkeys had escaped.

These nuisances, no doubt, as well as an inconsiderate action by the borough council, hastened on his schemes; for scarcely two months after I had first heard of them, there came a letter full of finality. He had arranged about the island, his very route was settled, a steamer had been chartered, all was in train for the mad enterprise. He wrote with enthusiasm, and announced his intention of staying some weeks on the island to overcome the risks that *I* had "so generously suggested." The crew and the natives, before putting off, would build him a hut and leave provisions, for the demented fellow, thinking more of his monkeys than his health, had lit upon a desert island. Later, he said, a native boat would call and take him back to the mainland, and he was ever my grateful old friend——

The signature was followed in brackets by "Pres., P.S.R.D.B.O.M.," initials which I found, on reference to the note-heading, stood for the Philanthropic Society for the Repatriation of Destitute Barrel-Organ Monkeys, but I have never been able to discover whether this preposterous organisation had any members beside my poor friend.

I did not answer, naturally.

The thing, however, got into some of the evening papers, and caused me not a little worry. Indeed, it is largely to Brand's ill-considered expedition, and the exaggerated press reports of its start which appeared, together with the efforts of certain reporters to drag me into the disreputable business, that I attribute my subsequent breakdown. The thought that anybody, bound however slightly to my family, should find his way into the halfpenny press, galled me more than I can say. At last, indeed, my doctor was forced to order me complete rest and a long sea-voyage.

Now, my last object in making this record is to try and glorify in any way my own behaviour in this matter, nor will anyone suggest that I have any need to be on my defence. I may therefore pass over the reasons that made me, confronted with a vague sea trip, draw out Brand's letter and note the exact position of his island. Suffice it to say that my beneficent idea was either to find Brand still there and console his loneliness, or, if he had gone, to bring him welcome news as to the progress of his simian charges.

Nor need I dwell upon the journey, least of all upon those final miles of sea, traversed upon a native boat mainly composed of two hollow trees united by a cross-bar, and most trying to a convalescent.

At last, however, the front end of this incommodious ferry grounded itself upon a coast that for some hours had seemed to recede rather than approach, and then my eyes lit upon a most extraordinary sight.

I had, of course, expected to see monkeys on this little island, but I had thought that they would be scattered over its whole area. Instead, as we disembarked, it seemed almost as though we had landed in a monkey-house, such a chattering crowd was there on every neighbouring tree.

The odd thing was that none of them paid any heed to me or the attendant natives. Their whole excited attention was directed on another spot, so that the snarling, fighting mob seemed quite oblivious of our arrival.

And then I realised the fact.

That object on which their gaze and, as I now saw, also their attack, had been directed was nothing else than my poor friend's native hut. Battered and half in ruins it lay, with a pile of cocoanuts and other projectiles around it.

Alas, what irony had led the deluded fellow, in that all too prophetic vision of the captives' first freedom, to picture them as throwing cocoanuts?

At the cry I gave, they swung about, first one, then another, and in a moment the savage fusillade was directed upon us.

My one thought, none the less, was now for Brand, who took no notice of my shouts. All was still within the little hut. I turned to my natives, about to urge them on to the attack, but they were scuttling back into their craft, and even whilst I spoke they put off, with much jabbering, to a distance out of range, and there, to my relief, waited till I was ready to return.

Afraid of missing the boat, and yet determined not to fail my old school-fellow and the godsire of my niece, I hurriedly advanced towards the hut. Luckily, as is well known, even expert marksmen find some difficulty with a moving target. Conceive, however, my dismay when I discovered that the door was bolted.

Over that minute, whilst I stood there battering the door, I still prefer to draw a veil of silence, nor does it affect my story.

One point, however, is of interest.

The mind in moments of stress, peril, and pain, is quicker than at other times, and I remember everything. Amongst my assailants, then, I recognised the monkey that Brand had bought when with me in that by-street of the Strand. It had grown into a fine, upstanding figure of an ape. Its aim, too, seemed unusually accurate. In a word, although its red jacket was tattered, it was in every other way a better monkey, and I feel it only due to my kinsman and to other members of the P.S.R.D.B.O.M., if any, to set it on record that, in the sole instance where I was privileged to see a candidate before and after, the experiment, however otiose, was a success.

Meanwhile the door yielded, and I entered suddenly.

Poor Brand, the shadow of himself, and with both eyes piteously black, raised himself on one elbow as, groaning and dishevelled, I staggered into the small hut.

"*Tommy!*" he exclaimed in joy. The poor fellow was delirious.

"No," I answered gently, "not Tommy, but an old friend, who has come to save you."

I was too late, though—I saw that. The poor apartment was battered with the projectiles, and so was the poor fellow.

"They're all right, old man," he said very faintly, as I put my arm behind his emaciated shoulder. "They don't mean any harm. They love me. Only—I got ill. I couldn't

Less prudent than my friend, I had omitted to barricade the door; and, as he said that, smiling happily, a cocoanut, its force not broken by coming through the shanty's wall, caught him a hideous crack upon the skull. A spatter of milk fell upon my hand, and in one moment Brand was unconscious on his back. In the next, there was an ugly rush of monkeys, led by the fellow from the Strand—whom he called Tommy, I believe—and I saw retreat to be essential. I looked hastily about.

"As the first of the monkeys bore down on us, snarling and stiff of tail, we pushed our frail bark on to the waves."

make their food or mend their clothes. They didn't understand. Still, they've got acclimatised, and now they're strong. Soon——"

His sentence was never finished.

Happily, the monkeys, like most desperadoes, had overreached themselves in one direction. The walls of the hut, made of wattled reed, had ill withstood the fierce artillery of cocoanuts, so that the very

fusillade which was planned for our ruin opened a way, narrow but yet adequate, for our escape. I seized Brand, ever a small man, in my arms.

As the apes surged in by the door, I went out by the impromptu window. Perhaps my unexpected action gave food for delaying thought to these monkeys, whose brain even Professor Darwin diagnosed as infra-human, or maybe my poor friend had some edibles within his hut. In any case, before the crowd had ceased to push its way into the open door, I, with my burden, was close beside the sea.

The natives, attracted by my cries, my haste, and the limp mass over my shoulder—conceiving it, as I later ascertained, to be a bag of treasure, in which they would share—hurriedly, if nervously, drew in; and as the first of the monkeys bore down on us, snarling and stiff of tail, we pushed our frail bark on to the waves, with much chattering, alarm, and splashing from the swarthy but white-livered boatmen.

Perhaps it was this last—the splashing—which, after some minutes, brought Brand back to life again. He stirred uneasily, and I leaned over him solicitously, so far as the crazy boat allowed.

"Where's Tommy?" he murmured drowsily.

I pointed to the fast-receding shore.

He looked around and instantly revived in an astoundingly active fashion which could not but alarm me, considering his weak health and the boat's instability.

"Back! Back!" he cried deliriously, snatching a paddle from the most convenient native. He back-paddled vainly.

Their signs were in the negative, and I, too, tried to calm him. But he would not. His exact words I try to forget—he was delirious.

"I saved your life," I said quietly, not in any spirit of vaunting, nor from desire of thanks, but because his attitude did not seem correct under the circumstances.

"You've murdered them!" he answered wildly. "Winter will come, and there will be no food, and all their little jackets——"

For a moment real tears broke the poor fellow's utterance. Then, just as I was about to console, he turned upon me with a fierceness, in fact, almost ape-like.

"Fool!" he cried, and much to a like tenor. "Saved me—helped me? Pah! You have wrecked my schemes, my hopes, my everything! Before I can get back, they will be dead. . . . Tommy a mere heap of bones! . . . And you—it is *you* who did it! Out of my sight—away from me this moment—slayer of my life ambition, and never enter it again!"

It was no use to argue. I contented myself with replying that I could not obviously meet his wishes so long as we were confined upon the narrow tree-like raft, which I believe to be called a catamaran; but once upon the ship, I duly bathed and had my meals at other times than Brand, and I have never seen him from that hour.

* * * * *

Poor Brand!

It has, of course, been quite impossible to ask him in on Sunday evenings to meet our circle, or to my wife's tea-parties, but I should put him down as a crank rather than a knave. As a man, he doubtless had good points. He sacrificed himself, like many, to an idea. But he was, so long as I knew him, a good business man, as well as a good godfather, although a curious fellow; and I have never concealed the fact, even from my wife, that I am sorry.

TRIOLET.

WHEN Summer slept on every hill,
And every breeze away had flown,
Love stole through the woodland still,
When Summer slept on every hill,
Dipped his arrows in the rill,
And stole back through the woods alone;
When Summer slept on every hill,
And every breeze away had flown.

LOIS VIDAL.

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THE BLACKAVISED MAN AND MY LADY.

BY CONSTANCE COTTERELL,

Author of "The Honest Trespass," "An Impossible Person," etc.

THERE are some things you know at once, and even while I was being introduced to her, I knew that she was and must be my lady.

I think she knew, too, just as suddenly that I was her servant, because, instead of saying "How d'you do?" she took me straight into her confidence.

"Do you see that man," she said to me, rapidly and hardly above her breath—"over there, talking to that hideous woman in bilberries and custard—a huge, black, evil-looking man?"

I looked. There was a sort of lane through the crush of guests, and down this lane a good many people were looking with curiosity. At its end I saw a big, tall, black-haired man talking with an agreeable smile to Mrs. Smith-Beauchamp, the poetess, a woman I had always thought striking, if only for the arrangement of her name. I ventured to repeat an epigram which I had made several parties ago to this effect.

"Never mind that," she said impatiently, "though she is undoubtedly hideous. Do you see him."

"I do."

"Well," she said rapidly again, and almost as if she were compelled to say it, "he is the bane of my life." She turned her back on the lane, and the man suddenly left off smiling.

I believe that I looked fiercely in his direction. At all events she murmured, first lifting her eyes on me and then suddenly dropping them: "Thank you! It's a pity you can't, isn't it?"

"He's the lion from New South Wessex," I stammered. It seemed so natural that she should read my thoughts, and if we had all been wearing powder, I should certainly have contrived to challenge him, though I liked the look of him uncommonly.

"Oh, I know he is," she sighed. "I think I know everything about him—to the other edge of weariness."

"But as for evil-looking——"

"Did I say he was evil-looking?" she demanded in an unanswerable kind of manner.

So that I did not answer.

"How often have you met him?" I ventured to ask.

"Four times." She sighed again. "Four terrible times. And he despises me, and I—I hate him!"

He struck me as being strangely kindly and unaffected, particularly when one remembered that everyone was talking of him, and fighting to have him at their houses, and that even the penny papers made placards of him, but now I dared not say so.

"He stalks round the sociological garden, contemptuously pitying the human animals captive in it," she cried. I admired this remark profoundly, and by this I knew how much I was her servant, for I have always thought wit a man's job, and preferred the women who listen. "He thinks we all ought to live in great wild places, and learn what the trees and the mountains and the rivers mean."

"When London means so much more," I said fatuously.

"It doesn't," she replied, as quick as lightning. "Of course he's right—that's partly why he's so odious to me."

"What does he think they mean?"

"He says creation is still going on; he says it's an eternal co-operation of men and —and Beings, and if we would only live in young, empty countries, we could see God creating a new people and help Him to do it."

"Why do you tell all this to me?" I inquired.

She flashed into my eyes an instant.

"You have sympathy."

Of this I had not been aware before; but self-revelation is the reward, and in the end the price, of talking with such a one as my lady. It was all at once clear to me that my relatives were wrong. I had sympathy — eclectic sympathy. I perceived also,

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almost at the same instant, that I would die to prove it to her.

If her eyes had not been shining on me, I might not have made the inane remark I made next. She bore with me and even quite patiently replied, and thus she bound me her slave for ever.

She let me call on her, and I called—often. Somehow the red and angry colour of the beginning of our acquaintance seemed to hang about it always. She or I—she, I think—nearly always spoke of that man from New South Wessex.

"What is the word," she asked me once—"the old word, you know—that they used for anyone dark and ugly and hateful?"

I contained myself in prudence.

"I know," she cried out next minute—"blackavised! He's blackavised. I never knew anybody so blackavised."

I was not ill-pleased that my lady took this line. He was so ridiculously belauded and adored on all hands, being but an ordinary man who had steered his ordinary colony through an ordinary crisis, that it was agreeable to me for her to hate him. There is a weariness in for ever hearing the praise of another. Sometimes I have fancied that it was I, in an earlier incarnation, who wrote the name of Aristides on the oyster-shell and got him banished so that I should not again hear him called "The Just."

One day I found her with red cheeks and great eyes. She had the look of an immense joy upon her. I imagined unexpected and sky-kissing news, but that only shows how differently appearances should be read in men and women. It turned out that she was really labouring under great annoyance.

"Oh," she cried with a big breath, and waved the very air of him away with her hands, "I suffocate! He has been here. He has flaunted his perfections here."

I remember that I was glad out of all proportion at her annoyance.

"He breathed up all the air there was with one snuff of his lungs. A man of his size wants a prairie all to himself! Directly he came in, everything except the larger furniture went out of focus. The footstools were imperceptible—I couldn't see anything smaller than a chair."

She threw out her hands again and seemed to throw off mountains of indignation. "Why does he come here to despise me?" she asked of the world.

"Perhaps," I suggested feebly—"perhaps he doesn't."

"Of course he does," she cried quite angrily. "He ought to. He's brilliant and powerful and serious and famous." She piled these up as if they were so many crimes, counting each off with a repudiating tap of her foot on the footstool. "He's Napoleon and George Washington in one, and knows everything, and always does the right thing, and never says anything unkind. Oh, how one's soul rises against these perfect persons! I hate him, and he knows it, and he despises me. 'Poor little thing,' he thinks, 'she hates Me!'"

I have often reflected since on the even pathetic futility of my every remark to her. I said now with the easy address of a schoolboy: "Women can't always read a man, you know."

"No?" Her shortest remark was eloquence.

"Despise him in return——"

"Oh, but I do!" she cried. "But is that enough?" And she rang for tea, and asked how I liked my new chambers.

As I crossed the hearthrug for my third cup—I who hate tea—she said—

"If he *is* a baronet, that's no excuse for his being a poet, and if he is a poet, he ought to be ashamed to be a baronet."

At the moment this remark appeared to me to be the most profound logic, and even now I feel it has point.

I heard of his calling on her again and yet again. She appeared to be much enraged, and I cast about for something that might calm her.

"Your *dame d'honneur*," I ventured once, "is an extremely intellectual woman. He too is intellectual. Doubtless he enjoys——"

I thought at that moment that I understood what her look meant. I have since found that I did not.

"She shall go into the country," she said with a sudden quiet decision.

It was done.

"You were quite wrong," she said a fortnight later. One who did not know my lady as I did might have imagined delight ringing in her voice. "He has called twice since I told him she was gone."

"Facts are the Oxo of self-esteem," I replied, and even then would have been glad to be told what I meant.

Epigrams always ran off her like rain. She seemed to give herself a little mental shake and be quite clean and dry again. She looked at me thoughtfully, but as though it were something else that she was thinking. "You think so?" she said.

"I have just prevented the blackavised

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man from coming," I jubilated one day as I went in, and looked for the reward of faithful service. She did me the honour to withdraw her outstretched hand and to turn her back upon me.

"But——" I stammered.

"You're stupid."

I stared at her in blank amazement.

She changed the places of the things on the little table by her side.

"But—but—" I stammered again—"but you hate him to come."

"Of course I do," she retorted quickly.

"Then—then why——"

My lady took no notice, but began to talk of other things, and we had talked conscientiously of other things for half an hour when I suddenly perceived that she was answering me.

"She changed the places of the things on the little table by her side."

"I'm learning humility from him," she said with fine satire. "It's very good for me. He sits and looks at me with his great eyes, and makes me feel small and despicable. Sometimes he stares at me as though he were trying to see me and couldn't, I was so minute. All the time I can tell he's saying to himself: 'Yes, you're pretty, no doubt, like a hundred other women; that is to say, you're endurable, but you've no mind, no intellect, no soul.' I can see it in his eyes. And I have! It's only that he, and everything about him, is so enormous. It's like a mountain looking down on a molehill, though the molehill is made of the same stuff, and would be a mountain if it could, only they've made it a molehill."

I saw liquid fire in my lady's eyes, and after that something more liquid still that, scientifically speaking, ought to have put out

the fire, but did not. I had no comfort to offer, and I believe she preferred it so.

"And he brings his poems and reads them to me, looking down from his mountain and seeing how stupid I am down there in the plain. And what people think you are, you are to them. I admire his hateful poems. Of course, they're wonderful, they can't help being—that's one of the things I hate in him—and I sit and tear my handkerchief to ribbons, trying to think of something very understanding and perfect to say when he has done, to prove that I have a soul and all that he thinks I haven't. And then I can't find a word, and he puts the papers together and looks at me—a long time, rejoicing in my senseless dumbness, of course, and goes away. Oh, it's unbearable!"

She was walking up and down the room.

"Once he asked me whether I cared for poetry, and I said, 'Yes, real poetry.' *Think* of the stupidity of the phrase! 'So do I,' he said, 'but the meanest stream must seek the sea.' 'I have heard there are—ponds,' I said, and he said, 'There are.' And he looked all at once either very proud or very humble."

I stood by the mantelpiece and had nothing to say.

"You see him sometimes, don't you?" she asked suddenly from where she was by the far window.

"At the club."

"Have you ever spoken to him of—me?"

"Never!" I reassured her. I thought there was a wistful look about the outline of her cheek turned away. "I am your loyal servant, lady," I said proudly.

"I know." But she sighed and kept her head turned from me. I feared she did not fully trust me. "You are always good," she added quite a minute afterwards.

"Well, you'll soon be relieved," I said, and settled myself comfortably after the storm. "I see in the evening paper that he sails for New South Wessex in a month."

"Do you tell me so?" cried my lady in that beautiful, queer, emphatic way of hers that had helped in the beginning, along with all the other things, to bind me her slave.

And she turned and came back and laughed. I wondered why she laughed, for I did not believe from her face that she wanted to laugh in the least. Indeed, I fancied that she was ill, and hiding it lest I should be distressed.

"What shall we find to talk about when he's gone?" I asked, as she sat down opposite to me. I have said before that my futility in her presence is quite unaccountable.

"What do we talk about now?" she asked, and stopped laughing.

"Him."

"I never utter his name!" she cried in indignation.

Something saved me from disputing the point; I think it was the delectable line of her profile as she sat and gazed—at what, I could not tell. I know that I did not speak for five minutes.

And then I was overcome once more, as I had been overcome many times, only this time I could no longer hold myself in, and I knelt down before her upon the hearthrug and asked her to marry me—me!—as soldiers lead a forlorn hope, not knowing why, nor exactly hoping to succeed, but blindly rushing on at the general's command. And the general, the one who uses arrows, had me at that time thoroughly in hand.

She turned on me in genuine surprise. A minute went by. Then she brought her fallen hands together in her lap.

"You! Oh, but you're a friend, a sort of better brother, not one of those people who are always wanting one to marry them! Please, please, don't forsake me!"

I was speechless. I had known all the time that I was behaving badly and abusing my privilege; I felt that I did not deserve to be forgiven. But suddenly, out of pure divinity, she put her hand in mine and forgave me.

And then I felt the need of country air. I went away to the place where I was born, and personified the dissipated city for quiet cousins and anti-opium aunts. At the end of a month I came back, bringing, I believed, the countryman's browsing peace to correct the joy-mirage chase of the city. All the way up I was rejoicing in my lady's joy. By now he must have left England, and she was free of him for ever. And day after day I could call on her, and we would talk of—well, not of him.

On my table was a note from her. I wondered why my clumsy fingers could not pick it up—I was not cold—and though I was not afraid of anything, they trembled. At last I held it and succeeded in opening it. It was very short, but at the end of half an hour I still had the sense of it to take in.

"To-day we start for New South Wessex. I have been Lady Blackavised just twenty-four hours. Dear friend, I wish you could know how happy, happy, *happy* I am."

I did know. That is why I have never been unreasonably happy since.

THE ESCAPADE.

By HARRISON RHODES.

TORRE SANT' AGNELLO recommends itself only to the occasional wanderer in the Apennines who is so Italianate as to love every inch of the beloved country, and is content to visit villages and little cities which allure no passing tourist with stars or double stars in the red guide-book. The good guide-book does, indeed, consecrate to it a line, and doubtless that is all it is worth. Yet anyone who has seen that lovely "Adoration of the Lamb" in Sant' Ubaldo's church will think it coldly described as "good altarpiece, erroneously attributed to Piero della Francesca." I, for one, would gladly be guilty of the error of that attribution. The hill-side, easily recognisable as that behind the town, is painted in those faint, poetic, spring-time greens, pale roses, and greys which you see so often in the work of this province's greatest artist, while the group of adoring saints who kneel in the foreground have the bold grouping and the rich colouring Piero also loved. Above them, by the trim little castle, of which there only remains now a ruined tower, stands the Sant' Agnello—the Holy Lamb from which the town takes its name—winsome and gay and adorable, as those quaint early painters so often knew how to make small, young animals. (Upon consideration, the guide-book might have been generous and bestowed a star.) There is a pleasant walk up the hill to the Torre dell' Agnello, or Torre dei Conti, Tower of the Counts, as they call it sometimes, and another to the little chapel or hermitage of Santa Chiara, outside the Arezzo gate. There are a few old houses in the Via Montefeltro, and in the piazza a shabby, little palace, now a chemist's and a dressmaker's, which once belonged to the Counts of Torre Sant' Agnello.

It is perhaps, after all, when you come to think of it, not much of a town. Yet from its dilapidations there flutter somehow the rags and tatters of beauty and romance, and perhaps in May, nothing in that green valley that runs up from Città di Castello could be quite intolerable. Within a quarter of an hour after my arrival, I saw that, in the "Albergo dei due Lepre," "The Inn of the Two Hares," I had found an authentic and unspoiled village hostelry, where there would be good cooking, where there was, I already knew, an excellent little local wine that was like opalescent amber in your glass, and a wise-looking and ancient man as host, who at leisure, I felt sure, would give me endless gossip of the town. Sitting in the sun with a cigarette after my early lunch, I looked at the ruined tower on the hill, and thought how pleasant it must once have been to be a Count of Torre Sant' Agnello, the great man of even this little town. Failing that, I meditated, it was something, in these degenerate days, to be the only *forestiere*, the only stranger there. My heart swelled with a pride of isolation which only others who specialise in unknown and neglected by-paths can understand. Then across the square, in the sunlight, I saw come the Signora.

I call her now merely the Signora, because for a time that was all the host of "The Two Hares," or, indeed, anyone in the village, called her.

"The Signora," explained the host in a whisper as she approached.

I half rose, after the foreign fashion, to greet her as she came near the door. She acknowledged my politeness with a queer, half-frightened little bow, as though such customs were still strange to her. She gave me, too, a shy smile, apologetic and friendly at once, with a curious, wistful, almost childish quality, an odd, awkward northern grace, a kind of hint of arbutus coming through the snow; but perhaps it is simpler to say at once that I fell in love with her then and there. She was quite sixty, and I was not even finishing my twenties, so there can be no harm in the confession.

Of just what she thought I was, I don't feel at all sure. I remember I had bought a suit of clothes in Ancona—Heaven knows how I may have looked—ambiguous, at least, I have no doubt—and although I am

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profoundly conscious of being an American, I know that I can easily acquire enough of the surface tricks of other nations to seem not fish, flesh, nor fowl. For example, the nearest I have ever come to being mistaken for a Frenchman is to be told that I spoke the language like a Spanish Jew who had learned it in Geneva. I don't know, however, why I enlarge upon these personal qualities of my own, unless it be to accentuate the fact that I, encountering the Signora unexpectedly in this remote corner of the Apennines, nevertheless knew instantly that she was from New England.

Had she been of the older branch, I might have been less surprised. There is no corner of Italy to which the lonely but intrepid widows and virgins of England do not occasionally penetrate, carried thither by the real and traditional affection of their country for this classic land, and by their own love of beauty, gallantly existing beneath the poor ladies' ungainly exterior and on their little pittances of incomes. Americans venture less often away from the beaten tracks, and not commonly alone.

"An *Americana*—so she says," ventured Luigi Savicotti, his bright old eyes fixed intently on me.

"Obviously," I answered.

"She is here a month—already a month."

"*Ma che!*" I exclaimed, as surprised as he could have wished. "A month! Why a month?"

"*Chi lo sa?* Who knows? I am of Torre Sant' Agnello, and I am proud of my town, *sicurissimo!* But to stay a month!"

He made an eloquent gesture to indicate boredom.

"Of course, I don't complain," he went on vivaciously. "I keep the hotel, and the Signora stays here. But"—here he lowered his voice, and disclosed, so I thought, one of the secret causes of his agitation—"she is an American, yes, but she doesn't seem to me to be so very rich."

I smiled. She had not looked to me so very rich, the poor Signora. I had already guessed that she must have applied for "*pension* rates," and suspected that the cheapness of life at Torre Sant' Agnello might be the unromantic reason which was keeping her here.

"Not all Americans are so very rich," I offered in apologetic explanation. "I am American, and I know."

The old man bowed in polite irony, as if I were pleased to jest, but he deserted financial topics.

"She is *simpatica*, the Signora, very, very sympathetic—good, too, *tanto buona!* She is pleased with Torre Sant' Agnello—she finds it beautiful."

He looked proudly down the little street and to the green hill beyond, crowned with its ruined tower, while I reflected that the Signora had known one of the few certain ways to the Italian heart.

"Yes," he went on musingly, "very *simpatica*. But"—and his mood changed—"a month in this little town! *Che vuola?* What will you? It is almost mysterious."

"We foreigners are all mad, or at least half mad," I ventured cheerfully.

He looked at me an instant—that wonderful instant in which Italians, by means of all kinds of extra senses and delicate clairvoyant instincts, decide what speech tact, in any particular emergency, demands. Then he answered my smile with another.

"You often seem so to us, sir," he said, and went away chuckling.

* * * * *

I spent the early afternoon prowling about the town. Later, I lay for a while on the sunlit hillside below the old tower, indulging in very primitive, very unsubtle, and very boyish romantic emotions, just plainly wondering how it would feel to be, not an American from Ohio, but a Count of Torre Sant' Agnello in the Apennines. For a half hour I ranged in fancy the hills and valleys of my domain, and came back from the hunt to my palazzo in the town, where the Contessa of Torre Sant' Agnello awaited my arrival, the very fairest of her sex. Ah, to be that Countess! That, I hoped, might touch a woman's imagination, too. And I am afraid that I was not even modest enough to substitute for myself, as Count, the darker and handsomer son of Italy who could make the alliance truly alluring. But much will, perhaps, be pardoned to boyish romance. At any rate, I came soon enough back to earth and down to the little town. I remembered that there would be dinner at "The Two Hares." I forgot the lovely Contessa di Torre Sant' Agnello and remembered the Signora. It would be too good to be true, I decided, that she should be, as old Luigi alleged, *misteriosa*. She was probably just a dear old thing from Boston, with whom, in any case, I had decided earlier, I was quite in love.

At dinner-time a party of rather rowdy commercial travellers occupied the main dining-room, if that is not too grandiloquent

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a term for the small, low-ceilinged *sala da pranzo*. In a smaller room, ordinarily the sitting-room of the Savicotti family, were placed the Signora and I, as *forestieri* of quality. Old Luigi's daughter, an active widow of about forty, had put on the table in our honour some of that splendid heavily-embroidered linen which you so often find, in this part of the country, in the presses of even the humblest inns. As I came in, there was over this tablecloth some show of discussion between the Signora Carolina and my compatriot. It was easy for me to slip at once into my place and into the conversation, which I sustained, with some apparent vivacity, on the subject of napery till La Carolina was called away by the "drummers" in the next room.

"I think it's a relief to her to have someone speak Italian she can understand."

A slight pink flush had come upon my friend's cheek. I made haste with the usual compliment—

"But you speak Italian very well."

And this was true, in a sense. The Signora's speech was careful—in a way, competent. You could see that she had studied the grammar, and that now she strained every nerve to put this "book learning" into practice. But the words came haltingly, sometimes with almost painful slowness, and the accent was purest New England.

"I've studied it for a year. I can read it, but the speaking comes hard."

"It's the practice," I said. "Perhaps you haven't been in Italy much."

"I've never been anywhere except Boston; this is my first trip abroad." I thought she blushed in apology. "It has come fairly late, hasn't it?"

"Well, better late than never. Have you been over long?"

"Oh, no—I landed at Genoa just three days over a month ago."

For a moment I stared. Three days to come from Genoa, and then a month here! Yes, old Luigi was right—she was *misteriosa*. And yet so good, so sound to the core, such an old dear—that I knew.

"You—you came to a pretty place," I said tentatively.

"Torre Sant' Agnello — I think it's beautiful!" She fluttered in a little rapture, ever so restrained, ever so ladylike, but ever so true. I knew it would be pleasant to go to see the Piero della Francesca altarpiece with her. "It's more beautiful even than I thought it could be."

"It's so out of the way, this little town; I wonder you found it." This was being persistent, sly, and curious. I knew it the moment I had spoken. I looked at the Signora, and I wondered whether it was possible I was not a gentleman.

But she had her own mild way of repelling me without seeming to take offence. She only said—

"Oh, I had heard of it often — very often."

Then Carolina came in with a steaming dish, and, arms akimbo, stayed with us till the end of dinner. Later, after a turn outside, I came back to bed. I had meant to get on towards Urbino the next morning. But I lit a pipe, looked at the young moon going down behind the hills, and then deliberately unpacked all my belongings and ranged them with comparative neatness in the dressing-table drawers. At breakfast I saw old Luigi, and I too asked for "*pension* rates."

* * * * *

We became friends gradually, and I did not cease, if I may continue to put it that way, to be in love with her. In time I came to know most things about her, except why she was in this valley of the Apennines.

She was not a spinster, as I had first been so sure, but a widow. Her name was Torrey—a non-committal New England name, with which my only associations were the memory of some pleasant Thoreau-like volumes, the author of which, so she said, was no relative of hers. She said very little of her husband, except that he had died only a year ago, and I had at least the decency to refrain from questioning her about him and touching upon so fresh a wound in her gentle heart.

She was really from Somerville rather than Boston, but for many years, I gathered, had lived in the larger town. At one period—a fairly long one, I imagined—she had been employed at the public library in dull clerical work, not highly considered nor well paid, and through these years she seemed to have lived meagrely in a South End boarding-house. Altogether, I patched together some kind of an idea of the grey, starved life which a middle-aged lady might lead, the kind of wretched living which she bent her poor, tired back to earn. It was impossible to see her now without thinking that all her life she must, consciously or unconsciously, have been longing for the beauty, the warmth that Italy gives us northerners. I could have sworn that now, day by day, the pink in her worn cheek was growing deeper.

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I remembered and compared her to that Christmas rose which I had once seen blooming against the red wall of an English garden in raw, grey December days after other flowers had faded and fallen.

Even before my arrival and our prowls together through Torre Sant' Agnello, she had acquired an amazing knowledge of the town. With the kind of unconscious daring which ignorance gives, she had plunged into many of the poorest homes, to make shy attempts at friendship and cautious efforts —mostly ineffectual, I am afraid—to teach the women some rudimentary New England notions of how to keep a house and a child clean. She had odd ideas, too. I remember one day she said to me—

"You know, they have no lady of the castle now, as they had in the old days. I wish they could imagine I took her place."

It was true that there was no longer a Contessa di Torre Sant' Agnello, the local line of counts having died out, or at least gone underneath the surface a good twenty-five years earlier, when the last of his name, so we discovered, having already lost all the family property, disappeared, or perhaps went to America, which, in the Italy of his day, was often the same thing. I doubted, however, from the little I had seen of Italian country life, whether his Contessa, were she in Torre Sant' Agnello now, would have taken anything like the affectionate interest in her people which my Bostonian lady did. In a sense, those whom she visited were grateful, for she was unquestionably *simpatica*—a person they liked. And yet somehow the ministrations came to nothing. Mrs. Torrey's speech was awkward and halting, and she knew little of Italian ways. She did not know, among other things, that her passion for New England cleanliness was considered merely a mild form of insanity, in which they humoured her. The lady herself, perhaps, understood the chief difficulty as well as anyone.

"I am afraid, after all," she said to me one day, with a sad little smile, "that the visits they would appreciate would be those of Lady Bountiful; and that's what I can't be."

She looked meditatively at the well-worn black leather bag which hung at her side—I was sure it was only thinly lined—then her eye was lifted for a moment to the tower of the Counts on the hill above us.

"They came down with baskets full of food and pockets full of money in the old days, I suppose."

"Yes," I retorted almost roughly, "and think how the poor villagers had had to slave for their masters that these baskets and pockets might be full."

"Oh, I don't like to think of that!"

"I know," I admonished her. "But you mustn't sentimentalise over the Middle Ages. It is much more wonderful, much more poetic that these ruffians here in Torre Sant' Agnello should be visited, not by their own Countess, but by a nice thing like you from Boston, on whom they have no claim whatever."

She stared at me a moment.

"No, of course," she said slowly. Then suddenly she turned to me. "What do you think?" she asked in a hurried and nervous voice. "Do you think I could be happy to live here—always, I mean?"

"Why, I don't know——" I began confusedly.

"I could probably get the rooms in the little palazzo very cheap," she went on. "There ought to be someone there, I think, and it's very beautiful here, isn't it? It is like the things I used to imagine all through those years in Boston."

"Yes, it's very beautiful," I answered honestly, "but it would be very lonely."

"Yes, I know," she cried. "That's what I've come to realise. It's awfully far from home." Her eyes looked suspiciously dim, as if with tears. "You are really the only friend I have here, and you are going away any day."

I'm afraid my eyes were suspiciously dim, too, if anyone had looked. I put my hand for an instant on her arm.

"Well, I am not going away yet, anyway," I said.

And I did not ask a single one of the thousand questions that sprang to my lips. But though I could control, I could not conquer curiosity. Why, indeed, had my dear old friend fled from Boston, Mass., straight to Torre Sant' Agnello, on the borders of the marches of Ancona? Was it poverty, romance, or just sheer fantastic folly that made her think of living here always? Or was there—the incredible thought would come—was there any horror back there that made the old life impossible, that had sent her forth a frightened fugitive to seek oblivion or even security? I put the question to myself. Yet all the while I knew that I had only to lift my eyes to the slender figure, to the kind, tired face that went by my side, to dissipate such black imaginings. Perhaps I was frowning. At any rate, Mrs. Torrey broke in upon my silence.

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"'Let's walk down and see the sunset from the river bank.'"

"I suppose it must seem queer my being here. Well, I used to hear a good deal about Torre Sant' Agnello from someone—well, from someone who is dead now."

And there we let it lie, for that day at least. Later I came to know almost everything there was to know.

And I suppose I must push on with my story towards that time. It would be pleasant to linger over those days when we, an oddly-assorted couple, explored the whole countryside. We were generally taken, I imagine, for mother and son, and I believe that there actually crept into our relationship something faintly, distantly like what that might have been. At any rate, time served its purpose. My friend came to know Torre Sant' Agnello and me both better. She came to have liking enough for us, confidence enough in us, to entrust us with her secret.

I remember that I came back from a walk alone that afternoon. From a distance down the street I saw, somewhat to my astonishment, Signor Nebruello, the *avvocato* of the town, much its most important lawyer, leaving "The Two Hares" in what seemed like agitation. I saw him meet the priest of Santa Catarina, stop him, and engage in an animated discussion, pointed by gestures directed towards the inn. I saw at the door Mrs. Torrey, waiting for me.

"Let's walk down and see the sunset from the river bank," she said, "if you're not too tired."

There we sat on an old stone parapet. The river hurried by. The washerwomen left their work by the pebbly edge of the stream, and the sun sank lower.

"I've just been talking to the lawyer and showing him some papers. He thinks I ought to let people in the town know, and I think I'd like to, but I wanted to tell you about it first of all.

"I never said much to you about my husband. I was only married to him for a little while—only for just a few days before he died. He hadn't been home since he left it twenty-five years ago. He called himself Torrey because that was easier, but he was an Italian. Yes, it seems queer, doesn't it? He was really a count, and I"—she made a queer little gesture of incompetence, unworthiness—"I am the Contessa di Torre Sant' Agnello."

* * * * *

It had all happened at the Boston boarding-house in the South End and at the hospital where he died. There had not been much suggestion in the middle-aged Italian who taught languages—and did not prosper much by them—of the young Count who had left Torre Sant' Agnello, having wasted his patrimony and, so they said, broken his heart. But America is the great harbour to which they carry from Europe wrecked hopes and shattered lives. Torrey's case is, indeed, common enough.

He had lived several years in the house in Boston before Miss Elizabeth Grant, as she was then, knew him beyond saying "Good morning" and "Good evening." It was when he fell ill, before they sent him away, that she brought him home a bunch of flowers once or twice, and some books from the library. When they took him to the hospital, there seemed to be no one else to go to visit him there, so she had gone.

I can imagine how he, knowing that the end was coming, had liked to talk to her of the Italy of his youth. I can understand how the tired professor of languages had liked to remember the days when he was a young man with a castle, though ruined, on a green spur of the Apennines, and, lying at his feet, a town which bore his name. It had probably for years meant nothing; now, as he was dying, he was proud that he was of the Counts of the Torre Sant' Agnello. It must have been as if from the dying embers there flickered up a faint flame of romance.

And I can see how dear Miss Grant's faded cheek must have grown pinker by this fire. For her there was no past to revive, but there were smothered longings, hidden emotions, starved love for what was strange and lovely and beyond the seas, which could be fanned into life now by this hospital bedside.

"I don't know quite how he came to think of it," she said, "but he seemed to grow fanciful and more like a boy, the weaker he got. He proposed it—and he laughed and kissed my hand at the same time—that I should marry him there, and be the Countess."

"'Why not?' he asked me when I objected. Oh, I objected, you can believe. 'It is an honourable name, otherwise I would not offer it to you. And it is not encumbered by me; I shall only last a few days, you know. I do not ask you to take me, because I realise you do not know me well enough to love me. Besides, we are old for love, you and I. But why not take the name? I have seen—I know—how dull, how monotonous life in that boarding-house is. I would like to think that, when I am gone, you will go to my Torre Sant' Agnello,

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—*mio paese tanto bello*—and be Contessa there.'

"I remember almost every word he said, you see," she added gently.

"And then you were married?" said I.

"Yes. I don't quite know how to explain why I did it. It was like having lived so awfully long without ever having even thought that you could ever do anything, or see anything, or be anything, and then to be asked to step into a fairy-book and live there."

"I understand," I said. I leant over the parapet and tore off a branch of flowering shrub to give her, I remember. "I've come into a fairy-book, too. I'm awfully glad," I added, and I know I laughed, "that we are going to be a countess, you and I."

* * * * *

I took a firm line at once. When we came back to "The Two Hares," there were the priest of Santa Catarina and the mayor's clerk waiting for my friend.

"I'm nervous—I hate to talk to them just now," she said.

"Will the signori do me the honour of interviewing me?" I asked. And when they looked at me doubtfully, "I am the secretary of the Contessa," I asserted unhesitatingly.

And so we tried it for a while, being a countess. Then, at the end of perhaps a week, my letters came, and I found that I must be in London within the month. I told her the news. It happened to be again sunset time, and we had walked down to the river.

"Of course, I see you must go," she said; and for some minutes, I think it was, we sat in silence and watched the rippling stream turn red.

"I'll start back with you, if it won't be too much trouble to you," she said at last.

"But, Contessa——" I began.

"I'll go back to Boston, I think."

"Without even seeing Italy?"

She smiled and looked up at the ruins above us.

"I've seen Italy—more than most of them see, I think. Oh, don't you understand," she went on swiftly—"don't you see that I'd better? I don't belong here. I'm no good here."

"Oh, no!" I protested.

"They don't want a poor, penniless old foreign countess. Oh, that's only one thing. But you've seen already that I can't help the church, nor the charities, nor anyone the way they think I ought to."

I was silent at first. I remembered some interviews I had had with eager fellow-townsmen of the Contessa's during the week past.

"They've always heard that American countesses are rich," I said at last.

"They wouldn't understand that I had to save up for a year to come even in a cheap cabin on a slow boat."

"They like you," I ventured.

"I think a good many of them do, but they don't quite understand me. I'm a novelty now, and interesting to them partly because of that. But the novelty would wear off. I'd be a kind of a joke, I'm afraid, and not such a very good one. They'd think I was a foolish old woman who had married because she was a snob and wanted a title. They won't ever understand, somehow, all the things the title means to me."

"Will they understand any better in Boston, I wonder?" I was thinking aloud.

"Oh, Boston!" she exclaimed. "I shall only call myself Mrs. Torrey there, as I did before. He called himself that always—I guess I can. It would be ridiculous to be a contessa in a South End boarding-house—I know that. And I'll probably be doing a little work at the library, too; I can't afford to be idle altogether. I'm afraid I couldn't really afford to live here idly, as a countess should. I tell you that because it is another reason why, after going over my accounts, I have decided to go back. Don't you think I'm really right?"

"I suppose so," I admitted despairingly. "You'll be less lonely, perhaps."

"Yes, and I'll be happier, too, there than I used to be, because I can always remember this."

She bore it better than I did. I tried to distract myself with preparations for our departure in a blaze of glory. I telegraphed to my rich Cousin Agnes, who lives at Florence, that I was in *desperate need* of five hundred lira. I got them, and I'm not sure whether I have ever paid them back or not. At any rate, I was able to go up to Città di Castello and make some purchases.

The day before we were to go was, as it happened, the Feast of Corpus Christi. In the little piazza of the town there came out from the church of Santa Catarina a procession of priests bearing the Sacrament, followed by almost a hundred children dressed in white and garlanded with flowers. And after the Mass was over the children

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again came out in procession, and marched past a little stand where the new Contessa di Torre Sant' Agnello sat with the mayor and other officials. The Contessa was in a beautiful lavender gown made by Marianna Alberti, the best local *modista*, who goes to Florence for the fashions. And to each child, as it passed by, she gave a gift, a little thing in remembrance, so that they should not forget her.

After this there was a little ceremonial over the small drinking fountain, which you may still see in front of the dilapidated palazzo of the Counts of Torre Sant' Agnello. It was presented to the town on that Corpus Christi day by the Contessa, as the inscription on it records. I fought with her over this fountain and its cost, but she *would* do it.

We adjourned to the hall of the *municipio*, where the officials and at least fifty guests drank to her health a frugal *vermouth d'onore* —vermouth of honour, as the Italians call it. At four o'clock the mayor said good-bye to the Countess at the train, and wished her a successful voyage to America and a speedy return. There was some vague hope, I think, that she was going to realise on her estates and return to Torre Sant' Agnello.

I said another good-bye to her when I put her on the steamer at Genoa.

"It's been fun, my being a countess," she said. "But it will be better, won't it, not to let people know about it? They'd only think me silly. Perhaps some day I will have saved up, and can afford to come over again and be Countess of my little town for a month or two. You can be sure I'll ask you to be there too. But I think now we'll call this my—well, my escapade. And keep it as our secret."

"Whatever you say," I answered. And then I just put my arms around her and kissed her on her dear, worn cheek. After all, people might have thought I was a son. "But you must always let me call you Contessa."

"People will only think that it's a joke," she replied. "It can't do any harm, and I have been, and I still am, the real and truly Countess of Torre Sant' Agnello. We know that, you and I."

"The best Countess they ever had, I believe," said I. And I believe it still.

THE LAD'S LOVE BY THE GATE.

DOWN in the dear West Country, there's a garden where I know
The Spring is rioting this hour, though I am far away—
Where all the glad flower-faces are old loves of long ago,
And each in its accustomed place is blossoming to-day.

The lilac drops her amethysts upon the mossy wall,
While in her boughs a cheerful thrush is calling to his mate.
Dear breath of mignonette and stocks! I love you, know you all.
And, oh, the fragrant spices from the lad's love by the gate!

Kind wind from the West Country, wet wind, but scented so,
That straight from my dear garden you seem but lately come,
Just tell me of the yellow broom, the guelder rose's snow,
And of the tangled clematis where myriad insects hum.

Oh, is there any heartsease left, or any rosemary?
And in their own green solitudes, say, do the lilies wait?
I knew it! Gentle wind, but once—speak low and tenderly—
How fares it—tell me truly—with the lad's love by the gate?

FAY INCHFAWN.

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THE MADNESS OF GERALD.

By JOHN BARNETT,

Author of "A Queen of Castaways," "The Prince's Valet," etc.

MY friend the Savage told me this story. He is twelve years old, with the face of a cherub and the unfettered nature of an Ancient Briton or a Red Indian. I have tried to tell the tale in his own words.

"Gerald was all right until he met that girl. He is my brother, and quite old, nearly seventeen. There used to be many things about him that I could admire. He wasn't quite as good a bat as he thought he was, but still he was pretty useful. I saw him make fifty-seven against Cheltenham at Lord's on a sticky wicket, when no one else was touching 'em, and I didn't mind a bit telling the people round me that he was my brother. I wasn't at all ashamed of him; and, though I don't believe in praising people to their faces, I told him as much afterwards. He was feeling bucked up at the time, and he didn't take the compliment in the spirit he should have done. There's no pleasing some people. They want you to lie down in front of them and drum your head on the ground. That is their idea of being properly praised. Also, he got his fifteen at footer, and was quite a clever half. I am modelling my game on his, with improvements of my own. Oh, yes, Gerald was right enough until he saw that girl!

"It was in the Christmas holidays. Gerald was leaving school soon, and was supposed to be working like mad for some footling exam. at Oxford. Gerald is not very good at exams. or that kind of thing. In fact, the headmaster wrote home about him that so far he had never done a stroke of work that was not wrung from him by force. He also said that, if Gerald had only bucked up at work as he had at games, or words to that effect, he would not have disgraced himself. But you know the silly sort of things that schoolmasters are fond of writing home. There was trouble about it with our people. Personally, I did not think any the worse of Gerald for it. Latin and tiresome things like that don't interest me a bit. Now, if they taught you the rudiments of bushranging or game-stalking, it would be different. It was on the golf course that Gerald saw that girl.

"I was caddying for him. He was playing in a rather important men's foursome, with a short-tempered retired major for his partner. The Major had been a trifle short with his putt on the twelfth green, and Gerald had a five-footer to get in. He was just shaping for it when I heard him give a sort of gasp. He had looked up and caught sight of something on the next tee, and was glaring at it with an awfully queer look in his eyes. I looked, too, and saw that it was a girl. But I didn't notice anything special about her. I never have. Girls all look much the same to me. They worry about keeping their hands and clothes clean, and they want you to wipe your boots. Some of them are taller than others. This was one of the taller ones.

"'Aren't you going to putt, Gerald?' the Major asked.

"'What was that you said, Major?' Gerald answered, absently kind of, and still staring.

"'I asked you to hole out, sir!' the Major snapped.

"Gerald took his eyes from that girl—she had just topped her drive, and appeared to be explaining why she had done it—as though it hurt him to do so.

"'To—hole—out?' he asked quite stupidly.

"The other two men and their caddies were staring. The Major stamped upon the green.

"'Dash it all, is the boy mad?' he raved. 'Do you see that ball, and that hole, and that putter in your hand, sir? What do you think you're here for?'

"Gerald seemed to wake up.

"'Oh—ah—yes!' he said. 'I'm sorry.'

"Then he bent down and missed the hole by exactly seven feet!

"The Major putted for a possible half.

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with a look on his face that made me quite nervous, and missed handsomely. He threw his putter to his caddie, and walked to the next tee, muttering something to himself which I couldn't catch, although I tried hard. But Gerald did not seem to mind a bit. He had never even troubled to watch if the Major got his putt down. He was staring into the distance.

"'What's up, old hoss?' I said to him pretty sharply.

"'Nothing,' he answered, quite surprised. 'We won that hole, didn't we?'

"'You didn't even halve it,' I told him grumblingly.

"'But—did you see that girl?' was all Gerald said.

"I didn't condescend to answer him. I was there to see my side win, not to look at girls. I was annoyed with Gerald. So was the Major. Gerald hardly played a decent shot for the rest of the round. He seemed to be looking into the distance all the time, which is bad for golf.

"'I should see a doctor, or something, my young friend,' the Major told him crossly, when they had lost by four and three.

"Gerald looked at him in a dreamy sort of way, and seemed to be wondering what the Major was talking about. And this maddened the Major.

"'I wonder if I can get introduced?' Gerald said, as though he was talking to himself.

"The Major said nothing, which rather disappointed me. But I honestly don't believe that he could trust himself to speak.

"Gerald did get introduced. He met that girl at some sort of footling dance, I believe, and he asked her for eight dances—I happen to know—and she gave him two. (My sister Dorothy was there. I heard her telling the mater about it. She said poor Gerald had made himself quite ridiculous.) Gerald came home from that dance, and practically gave up eating solid food! It was quite awful to see him at meals, especially when you remembered what his appetite had been before. He wouldn't even go out rabbit-shooting, except once, and then they told me that there had nearly been an inquest. They said that Gerald wasn't fit to be trusted with a gun nowadays. And he wasn't again. But fancy anyone thinking of a wretched girl when he might be shooting with a real gun! And he wouldn't play golf. But there, perhaps, he was wise. Anyway, I know that the Major would have refused to have him for a partner. He just mooned about by himself, and it was horrid to hear him sigh. He took to reading poetry, too, a thing he had never done before—and quite right, too—and queer old-fashioned books about chivalry and that sort of stuff. And one evening, after reading hard at some book about a troubadour, I believe, he came to me and drew me aside.

"'Can you play any sort of musical instrument, young fellow?' he asked.

"I was surprised, but I knew it was well to humour Gerald these days. I had tried chaffing him about that girl, and—and, by Jove, I wished I hadn't, I can tell you! Gerald has got a wrist like whalebone, and would have made a pretty good schoolmaster in some ways. But I should have been sorry to be in his form. So I humoured him.

"'I'm pretty useful on the penny whistle,' I said.

("So I am. I only had it for one day at school, then Phelps, my house-master, collared it, like a brute, and kept it till the last day of the term.)

"'It's a pretty hateful sort of instrument, isn't it?' Gerald said thoughtfully. 'How would it sound out of doors?. Could you make it heard at any distance?'

"I told him that Phelps had heard me playing 'Annie Laurie' on it through two closed doors and all the way down a long passage, and he seemed fairly satisfied.

"'I've got no ear myself,' he told me regretfully. I knew that. When they tried him for the choir, they only let him sing one line, then they stopped him. That is the sort of voice and ear he has. 'I've bought a concertina,' he went on more hopefully; 'it's the only musical instrument I know of that you don't want any ear for.'

"'Don't you?' I said doubtfully.

"'No!' he snapped, quite his old self for the moment. 'Get your bicycle and the penny whistle ready, and put on some thick clothes. You've got to come out with me to-night.'

"'Where to?' I asked, although not really objecting to the idea.

"'Never you mind,' he said sharply. 'You do what you're told, if you don't want trouble.'

"Well, I went on humouring him. Besides, I liked the idea of a night expedition well enough. But it would mean slipping off without any grown-ups bothering.

"I don't suppose I shall ever forget that night. We left the house from a side door unnoticed. Gerald had got himself up rather curiously in a biggish felt hat and a kind of loose mackintosh cloak. He was to be glad

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of that mackintosh later. But he wasn't looking his best, and I told him so. He just told me to shut up. Luckily it was very dark, without a moon. Otherwise Gerald might have been guyed, going through the village in that rig-out.

"'Is it far?' I asked him, when we were among the lanes beyond.

"'About eight miles,' he answered shortly, and I was rather sick to hear it. I had had a tiring day, but it was merely silly to argue with Gerald in that mood.

"I hadn't a notion where we were after a while. Suddenly Gerald said quite gently, as though he was pleased: 'Now we are going to go down a bit of a hill.' And next moment I had the feeling that I was riding over a precipice.

"Gerald, I may say, has made quite a name for himself upon a bicycle in our neighbourhood, which is hilly. He always rides full tilt down any hill, however steep, and he seldom cares to break for any reason. People still speak of his ride down Gallows Hill, I believe. It was a Sunday morning, and everyone was coming home from church. They met Gerald on the way. It was reckoned afterwards that he missed killing nineteen separate people by anything under an inch, to say nothing of seven dogs. People were flinging themselves into hedges and ditches in their Sunday clothes as he came. Only one living creature on the hill was quite unmoved besides Gerald—that was a fat pug dog. It lay down in the middle of the road and watched Gerald coming. It seemed interested in him. At the very last moment it got up and moved to the right, just as Gerald swerved in the same direction. Gerald and the bicycle went through the hedge. The pug stayed on the road. The bicycle was never any real good again, and Gerald had to pay three guineas to the owner of the pug—she had him unflattened and stuffed.

"But this has nothing to do with that awful night, except to show you what Gerald was like downhill on a bicycle. I really thought he would have two deaths to answer for. I just clung to my handle-bars and wished I was in bed. It felt more like falling than riding. I remembered several things that I had done lately, and wished that I hadn't done them. You could just see the hedges fairly shooting past, otherwise there was nothing. Gerald was laughing jollily. I'm not sure that I was not yelling. Luckily that hill was straight. We came alive to the bottom, and ran for about a mile on the flat before we could slow down. And then I would have told Gerald what I thought of his madness if I had not still been humouring him. It was he who spoke.

"'You say you can play "Annie Laurie,"' he said dreamily. 'That will do very well. Her name happens to be Annie—Annie Cartaret.'

"I said 'Great Cæsar!' and Gerald just told me to shut up.

"But I knew now what we were going to do. Falling in love and what he had read in those silly books had made Gerald more or less mad. That is the only explanation. Anyway, he was going to serenade Miss Cartaret as the knights and troubadors used to do. He had taken me along with him because he had no ear himself for music. I was to grind out 'Annie Laurie' on the whistle, and he was going to make some sort of noise on that concertina.

"He admitted as much when I asked him.

"'Yes, that's what we're going to do. It's rather a pretty name, Annie, isn't it, young fellow?'

"I said: 'Do you think they keep a dog?'

"Gerald said that they did, as he happened to know—a large St. Bernard. He said, if I was afraid, I could turn back. I told him that I hadn't a notion of the way home. He said crossly: 'Then what are you arguing about?' And I thought of his wrist and went on humouring him.

"That was a long eight miles, and we lost our way twice, but we got to the Cartarets' house at last. It must have been about eleven when we got off our bicycles. The Cartarets seemed to have gone to bed, but there were still lights in several of the upper windows. Gerald pointed to one of them.

"'That is her room, I am sure,' he said, speaking with a queer kind of huskiness.

"'What if it isn't?' I asked.

"He muttered some rot about instinct, and ended by saying more naturally: 'Stop arguing with me, you kid!'

"So I stopped. But it wasn't her room, you know. It was occupied by a man, and a man with no pretensions to decency of feeling. But we had to find that out.

"We left our bicycles in the lane, and advanced cautiously into the big front garden. The house seemed to be a large, spreading sort of place. Personally, I was thinking very hard about that dog. A St. Bernard is a ripping kind of animal for a friend, if it knows you well, although inclined to be rough very often. But as an enemy——

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"As it turned out, we almost walked into its kennel. It wasn't chained up—it had a kind of run behind bars. Thank goodness, it *was* behind bars! They were tried pretty high that night, and I should think they would have held a lion. Anyway, they held that St. Bernard, and I should like to shake hands with the man who put them up, and give him sixpence. He had not scamped his job. That dog woke up at sound of us, and made the most savage, determined attempt to break loose. And the noise it made was appalling. Whilst it went on barking, it was silly to think of serenading anyone; my whistle at its loudest would have been entirely useless. So we went away a little distance and crouched under a tree, until that dog's throat got so sore that he had to give it a rest. When I say that we went away to the tree, I mean that Gerald joined me there; I had moved away pretty quickly directly the dog began. The noise made my head ache. Besides, I had my doubts about those bars.

"No one in the house seemed to be disturbed by the din. I supposed that they were used to that dog. When he was quiet again, we left the tree and went on tiptoe underneath the window that Gerald was fathead enough to believe belonged to Miss Annie Cartaret. And then we got out our instruments and struck up 'Annie Laurie.'

"Without swaggering at all, I may say that I have never played better. I may have played louder in my time, but that night I seemed to hit the tune at once and stick to it. Generally it takes me several false starts to get into my stride, and other airs have a horrid way of mixing themselves up with it. It sounded very well to me. Indeed, I think that, if I had been playing alone, no one could possibly have objected to it. But I wasn't playing alone. Gerald was coming in at intervals with squeaks and groans from his beastly concertina, and that spoilt the whole effect. We had not been playing for more than a minute and a half, when the window above us was flung up.

"'There she is!' gasped Gerald. 'Keep it up, young fellow!'

"But it wasn't Miss Cartaret. It was a man—a brutal man. He didn't say a word. He just emptied his water jug—a very large one—slap over us! It was then that Gerald must have felt pleased that he was wearing that queer mackintosh cloak. I know I wished that I had had one on, too.

"Then the man spoke.

"'Now will you stop that horrid noise and go away?' he asked.

"Gerald spat some water out of his mouth, and answered him quite calmly, or fairly calmly—

"'I wasn't playing for you.'

"'Oh,' said the man, 'I'm glad to hear it! But not being stone deaf, I had to suffer. Who *were* you playing for?'

"'That's my affair,' Gerald answered proudly.

"The man leaned further out of the window and looked down upon us. He seemed puzzled.

"'I don't know if I'm dealing with a lunatic or two lunatics,' I heard him mutter. 'One of them's got up like an Italian opera singer or organ-grinder. But they're both pretty wet.'

"We were—there was no doubt of that. But that was his fault, not ours. I would have told him so, and what I thought of him, but at that moment that dog began to howl and rage once more. The noise came nearer, and I heard steps too. I would have run for it, but there didn't seem anywhere safe to run to.

"'Is that you, George?' asked the man at the window.

"'Yes, sir,' answered a voice, and I saw the shadowy figure of a man behind us. He had that dog on a lead, and it was trying hard to get at us. It didn't seem right to me for one man to try to restrain that dog; it wasn't safe.

"'I've got Bruno 'ere,' the voice went on. (As though we didn't know it!) 'Shall I set 'im at 'em, sir? Is it burglars?'

"'I don't know *what* it is,' the man above said in a tired sort of way. 'Will you go away quietly?' he called down to Gerald.

"Gerald cleared his throat. 'No, not until I've spoken to the person I've come to see,' he answered firmly.

"'You choose strange times for paying calls,' the man above said, still speaking as though he was tired. 'It's after eleven o'clock! I think you *must* be a lunatic! What's your name, and who is it you want to see?'

"And then there came another voice from another window. And though, as I have said, I don't think anything of girls, yet I must say it was a nicer sort of voice than any we had heard that night, including Bruno's.

"It said: 'I believe I know who that is, father; I think it must be Mr. Gerald

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Hallows. And he's really neither a burglar nor a lunatic. *Is* that you, Mr. Hallows?'

"Gerald's voice had got husky again.

"'Yes, Miss Cartaret,' he answered.

"'There she is!' gasped Gerald. 'Keep it up, young fellow!'"

"'Who was it you wanted to see?' she asked rather nicely and gently. 'Was it me, by any chance? You were playing, weren't you?'

"I fancy that Gerald was feeling a bit of an ass. I can't wonder if he was. But the man above had made him obstinate, and when Gerald gets obstinate, nothing will make him do a bolt, even though he feels like fifty asses. I respect him for that. But by now I was feeling wet and cold, and rather sick of it all.

"'Yes, it was you,' Gerald said, and then his voice got louder. 'And I won't go away until I have spoken to you!' he cried out.

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"'Oh, young man, you're really a dangerous nuisance——' began the man at the window. But Miss Cartaret interrupted him.

"'I'm going down, father,' she said.

"'If you think it's safe,' remarked the horrid man at the window.

"She laughed, and I rather liked her laugh.

"'Oh, it's quite safe!' she said. 'You may take Bruno away, George.'

"The dog was dragged unwillingly away, and I was pleased enough to see it go. We waited there, and my teeth were chattering with cold. In a few minutes the front door opened, and I saw Miss Cartaret in the light. There was a white lace sort of thing over her black hair. I suppose she looked nice enough, if you happen to care about girls.

"'Won't you come inside, both of you?' she called.

"I wanted badly to go in and get warm, but Gerald wouldn't hear of it. I think he was too proud, after the insults of that man.

"'You stay here, young fellow; I shan't be a minute,' he muttered to me, and left me standing there.

"He spoke to Miss Cartaret on a little lawn. I don't know what they said to each other—I was too cold and tired to care very much—but in a little while I heard her say, 'I am so sorry!' very gently and kindly. Gerald did not answer anything that I could catch. But a minute later I heard them say 'Good night.' Miss Cartaret walked back to the door, and stood for a moment looking at Gerald, who had come very slowly to where I was. She called 'Good night!' once more, and Gerald took off his felt hat without speaking. Then he turned to me: 'Now, kid, home!' he said, and his voice was queer.

"I judged it best not to speak to him. It began to snow, and we kept losing our way, and I thought we never should reach home. Gerald only spoke once all the time. Then he said: 'You may be interested to hear that Miss Cartaret is engaged to be married! I'd rather you didn't speak of her again to me.'

"And I haven't. I know better. We both had baddish colds next day, and Gerald was pretty low in spirits for about a week. But then quite suddenly he began to be interested in his meals again, and he turned out on Saturday for the local rugger club. He didn't play at all a bad game, either. Perhaps he's going to get his senses back, after all."

UNITY.

THE moon unlimbers in the height,
And fires the shrapnel of the stars;
The stirred boughs yearn unto the light
Shook from the bannerol of Mars.

The ground-whirl whips the fallen leaves,
They stumble in their whimpering haste,
And herd and huddle in drifting sheaves
Across the wet lawn's eerie waste.

These are but common sights and shows,
And change their semblance in the dawn.
Meanwhile the midnight Watcher knows
He is one with sky and leaves and lawn.

WALLACE BERTRAM NICHOLS.

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THE FACE IN THE FOG.

By JESSIE POPE.

SAM THRUPP sat in his studio with an unusually dejected expression on his plump, pleasant-tempered face. And it was really rather unfortunate that he should be feeling unhappy on that particular morning, for, as half a dozen hastily-opened and thrust-aside packages testified, it was his birthday. To be sure, birthdays had lost the charm they possessed for Sam in his school days, when tactful hints and carefully-thought-out letters, sent to the right quarters, generally resulted in the presents he had set his heart on. Yet, even though now arrived at maturer years, Sam still liked his birthdays, and was gratified that his family and friends seemed pleased he had been born. To-day, however, the gifts were hardly glanced at, many of the letters unopened, and the object of their affectionate congratulations sat with his pipe in his mouth, a frown on his brow, a pencil in his hand, and a drawing block on his knee, the fair white paper of which was half covered with rough sketches of a face, which, while being satisfactory enough as a face, just missed being *the* face that our hero had wasted three good working weeks in trying to remember.

To worry yourself for three weeks into what is practically a nervous breakdown because you can't exactly recall the correct relation of a pair of eyes to a nose, or a mouth to a chin, or the exact position of a couple of dimples, is to show in the general way that Cupid has got a bull's-eye this time, and Sam's case was no exception to the general rule. For nine-and-twenty years, less three weeks, he had managed to dodge those darts successfully, and much to the annoyance of various ladies of his acquaintance, whose charms had rebounded against his brotherly heart like so many bouncing balls. Not that Sam was a selfish or disagreeable person; he had, on the contrary, a kind and sympathetic nature, and was particularly fond of his many lady friends; but one and all found that fraternal affection, though a pleasant and useful possession, does not, and never will, lead to the altar. Of course, this state of things seemed a pity from their point of view, for Sam had a good appearance, a good temper, and a good income, not to mention a rather shy but boyishly engaging manner that would have made him attractive, even if he had lacked his more solid possessions.

Like many easy-going bachelors of nine-and-twenty, however, our hero found that his week-end golf was not sufficiently strenuous to keep his weight within proper limits, and had, in consequence, taken quite enthusiastically to walking exercise. Ten miles on end twice a week was his self-imposed prescription, and it was when he was returning from one of these hygienic excursions that the first of the disasters to be chronicled by this narrative occurred, the particular disaster, in fact, which formed the subject of his brooding reflections as he sat moodily sketching in his studio, on his birthday morning, and for about the sixty-third time—allowing twice a day and once during the night—recalling the details of that eventful walk. He vividly remembered how he had turned back before reaching the fifth milestone, because instead of the frosty autumn sunset effects he had hoped to witness—for Sam Thrupp was an artist by trade—a thick white mist came rolling over the meadows and soon obliterated not only the features of the landscape, but the very road in front of him, until, as evening fell and complicated the situation, he could neither see his hand before his face, nor, what was more to the point, the path before his feet. Fortunately he knew the road like the inside of his hat, and was careful to keep to the slightly raised footpath, having no desire to personally investigate the interior arrangements of motor-cars or cottage hospitals. His precautions, however, were not entirely successful, though, as it happened, it was not a motor-car that ran him down, but a bicycle, and a lady's bicycle at that, which came noiselessly out of nowhere and got him fairly in the back.

Sam plunged forward with outstretched

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arms, but managed somehow to regain his balance just in time to hear a frightened feminine ejaculation and a loud metallic clatter as the bicycle subsided into the ditch. His unselfish and chivalrous nature was touched at once.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "I hope you're not hurt? Let me help you."

There was no spoken reply, but two small hands were put into his, and their owner was soon half pulled, half lifted out of the ditch to the path, and the bicycle, though a more substantial and stubborn thing to assist, was finally extricated and placed beside its mistress. So far so good, and, panting a little, Sam paused for thanks and apologies from the small female figure standing so close to him and yet almost invisible in the puddingy atmosphere. "Another time," she said, and her voice was hard, though still tremulous from shock, "perhaps you will kindly walk on the footpath instead of the road. It will be safer for all concerned."

Sam stared, and the match he had just struck to light the extinguished lamp went out at the shock, but its one glimmer enabled him to see that the dishevelled hair that had strayed from his companion's head-gear was white as snow, and it was this fact that softened his reply, for Sam was always courteous to his elders.

"But I *was* on the path," he said gently. "It is you, I think, who have mistaken the path for the road. But that's not to be wondered at, a night like this—it really isn't safe to bicycle at all."

"It would be *safe* enough," snapped the old lady, "if pedestrians would remember to keep their proper place." And, without waiting for a reply, she mounted her machine and disappeared into the fog.

Ruefully rubbing his back, which he calculated would certainly be sore for a week, and heartily wishing the irascible dame had chosen somebody else for a buffer, Sam resumed his walk, pretty sure he would come across her again, though probably in the other ditch. In any case, it was a relief to know he was on the safe side this time—that is to say, behind and not in front.

Before he had gone fifty yards, his expectations were to some extent realised, though she wasn't in the ditch, but suddenly loomed out of the fog, standing in the road by her bicycle.

"Is that you?" she said.

"Yes," replied Sam, then added hesitatingly, "at least, it is *me*, but you may mean someone else."

"No, I don't," she replied; "I mean the man I ran into, and I know the voice again. Well, I waited to tell you that it *was* my fault. I found I had mistaken the path for the middle of the road. I'm sorry I spoke as I did."

Sam's kind heart always melted before penitence.

"Oh, that's all right," he said. "You were a bit knocked out with your spill, and, you know," he added in that filial way of his that endeared him to all old ladies, "it's a dreadful night for you to be bicycling. Do take my advice and walk until you get to the main road. There won't be much mist there—it stands so high. As I'm going that way, please let me lead your bicycle for you." That this rather strong-minded old person was feeling scared and lonely was evident from the grateful, half-tremulous note in her voice as she accepted this young man's protection. So they walked on side by side, and as they walked they talked, and, what's more, they became so interested in their conversation that climatic conditions were forgotten, time passed quickly, and the miles seemed to shrink to furlongs. Of course, out of due respect to his companion's years, Sam did not discuss frivolous topics, but touched on books for a start, and from books they passed to politics, and from politics to the wider and more fascinating field of abstract subjects, life, death, eternity, and little things like that.

Perhaps it was the darkness and the fog that made it easier to say what one hoped and feared about these things, than face to face in the brazen daylight. Certainly Sam had never unbosomed himself to such an extent before, and the little old lady, though her cocksure manner had by no means deserted her, would often drop her half-shrewish, half-dictatorial manner quite suddenly, and defer to his superior wisdom in a way that was at once charming and pathetic. But perhaps the most extraordinary part of the whole affair was the way in which their thoughts and opinions ran along the same lines, the sudden linking of ideas, the quick understanding sympathy between soul and soul, which Sam, for one, had never experienced before.

And then, alas, they turned into the main road, where, as he had predicted, the fog became so thin that his companion, with an obvious note of reluctance in her voice, announced her intention of remounting her machine.

"Then you must let me light your lamp,"

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said Sam. And, taking it from the bracket, he adjusted the wick. "Is that about as high as you like?" he remarked, and turned the brilliant lens towards his companion's face a moment. Only for a moment, but that flash of time showed him the face which for the next three weeks it was to be his tantalising task to recall.

"'The bloke be'ind you's got yer sovereign!'"

The first thing the lamp showed was that the loosened lock of hair was whitened only by the combined action of mist and hoar-frost, and behind it came a gleam of pale gold framing the face of a very young woman, so young that it had hardly lost the immature contour of childhood. It was a face made up of contradictions, that dogged little pucker between the straight brows, for instance, and the gentle, almost pleading expression in the grey eyes; and while the chin was full and square and very determined, the lips preserved their exquisite line of childish innocence; and finally the fearless fighting quality about the expression was practically circumvented by a very delightful and babyish dimple in either

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cheek. Just as the lamp shone on it, the face was white and weary-looking, but the lips parted in a quick, never-to-be-forgotten smile as she replied—

"Thank you—that will do nicely. Good-bye!" Then she mounted her bicycle and was gone.

For the first few minutes Sam continued his walk home, too astonished at that sudden revelation of the bicycle lamp to realise what he had lost. Then it came over him, like the gust of a tempest, that here at last he had met, not "the not impossible," but the "*only possible* she," the woman he had been waiting for, his life's mate, his heart's affinity, and all the rest of it. He had not only met her, but talked with her, soul to soul, wondering at the strange and delightful sympathy that grew stronger at every word, till the unexpected discovery of her youthful charm had shown him the reasonableness of this bond of harmony between them. And he had let her go without a word, he had let her pedal away in the darkness and vanish before his astonished eyes, and the probability was that he would never see her again.

Sam called himself a fool not once, but many times; in fact, he did little else for the next three weeks. He grossly neglected his work and his social duties; he grew morose and absent-minded, and shaved less frequently than he should have done, for all the dormant romance of his heart was wide awake. He was helplessly but quite hopelessly in love.

That was why, on his birthday morning, he pushed the parcels and letters aside, and sat moodily wasting the precious passing moments trying to remember that pale, elusive face, the one glimpse of which had resulted in reducing his weight far more effectually than all his self-imposed pedestrian exercises.

But the pushing aside of parcels won't altogether dispose of the Birthday Spirit, which comes and taps each of us on the shoulder, and, with stern eyes and uplifted finger, seems to say on these occasions: "Here's another year gone. Now, what is your candid opinion of yourself, my friend?" It was in answer to that question that Sam got up suddenly, tossed the pencil and sketch block over to the neglected parcels, and gave his big shoulders a shake and a stretch.

"Oh, hang it!" he exclaimed. "What a silly ass I am! I won't give the girl another thought. I've done with the whole business! And, after all," he added, as he strolled across to the window, "the odds are she was married."

The studio was a large upper room of a house in the main road, along which the electric trams passed up and down incessantly. Sam was too accustomed to the hum of the cars and the switching of the wires overhead to notice them; but this morning the sounds got on his nerves, and he stood looking out, hoping rather viciously that a heavy van horse, which had fallen on the slippery wood pavement across the lines, would not be put right way up before it had stopped the progress of an approaching down car. His pious hopes were gratified. The car was held up nearly opposite to, and on a level with, his window, while the driver and conductor, already behind time, commented with some impatience on the situation. The incident, however, soon lost interest for our hero, whose blue eyes strayed indolently over the two or three chilly passengers on the top deck of the tram. Then all at once he stiffened, his heart gave a mad leap, and his healthy, though somewhat unshaven, cheek went very white, for there she sat on the top of the tram, straight in front of his very eyes. Yes, it was the same pale, thoughtful, long, oval, lovely, immature face, the same square, dogged little chin, the same sweet, childish mouth, and no doubt the same dimples, if Sam had not been too far away at the moment to renew his acquaintance with them. That disadvantage, however, was easily rectified, and, with one frantic leap to the door, he wrenched it open and flew down the stairs, seizing a cap and coat from the hat-rail on his way. The cap was an obsolete affair, frayed round the peak and the lining bulging out behind—it had, in fact, been the plaything of more than one terrier puppy. Nor was his choice of a coat much happier, for he wrenched down, as he passed, a very old mackintosh, long ago discarded and merely used nowadays by the studio char-lady as a dust sheet. But what mattered such trivial details when his mind was obsessed with the overwhelming fear that the tram would start without him and snatch from his grasp the second golden opportunity that kind Fate had put in his path. As a matter of fact, the tram *was* just getting under way as Sam boarded it, for the van horse had convulsively struggled on its legs again, and was standing, very shaky and sorry for itself, by the side of the road. The troubles of a van horse, however, were of no account to Sam, who, pale and trembling,

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and hardly crediting his wonderful luck, slipped into a seat behind the Fog Girl, with no intervening passengers to interrupt his view. She was dressed in an orthodox blanket coat and a fur cap, and also held a large muff. They were quite ordinary garments, but appeared, to Sam's infatuated gaze, the draperies of a young goddess, who, flying earthward, had perched in a commonplace and unobtrusive manner on the top of a tramway car.

Her presence seemed to illuminate this particular top deck with a rainbow sheen, and the conductor, coming up to collect fares, was quite out of the picture — in fact, Sam looked at him with an absent-minded frown of annoyance, then suddenly came to himself and tendered a penny. The Fog Girl also took a ticket of the same colour, which helped, in Sam's silly attitude of mind, to rivet another tender bond between them. It was while the conductor was still on top, exchanging comments with the driver on the van horse incident, that the Fog Girl all at once began to show sudden signs of agitation. She searched her little bag, her purse, her lap, the seat and the floor, and then got up and shook herself. Her face expressed perturbation and distress, and just as Sam, who had been following her every movement with hawk-eyed attention, was about to obtrude himself into her notice by offering to assist her, whatever the trouble might be, she called imperatively to the conductor to stop the tram *at once*, as she had dropped a sovereign, which had rolled through a crack to the road below.

It always seems one of the saddest dispensations of Providence that one man's sorrow is generally another man's joy, and in the present case the disaster that had befallen the Fog Girl gave Sam Thrupp the keenest satisfaction, and as she hurried down the steps and jumped off the tram before it stopped, in her anxiety to retrieve her lost piece of gold, Sam followed, and, with a diffident but sympathetic courtesy, also began to search along the side of the road and in the gutter. In her hurried flight from the top of the tram, her eyes had met his for a moment, but naturally there was no trace of recognition in her glance, for though it is possible—nay, probable—that her thoughts had often dwelt on the interesting stranger who wheeled her bicycle for her on the night of the fog, she could hardly recognise his face, as she had never seen it. The presence of this shabby person, officiously assisting in her search, seemed rather annoying to her than otherwise, and she showed no knowledge of his existence excepting by the ominous deepening of the well-remembered pucker between her straight brows. She could not, however, ignore the little crowd—including the inevitable small girl with a baby in a mail-cart, the sharp-looking errand-boy, and the out-at-elbows loafer—which always gathers as soon as a search of any kind is in progress. Sam, however, in his uplifted frame of mind, was unconscious of its presence, unconscious even of the road beneath his feet. To all intents and purposes, he was treading an iridescent cloud in company of the radiant young goddess before-mentioned. Then a gleam of gold caught his eye. It was not the sovereign, but, joy untold, it was a hairpin, gilt by reason of the tresses it matched, having in fact just fallen from the Fog Girl's head as she stooped over the gutter. Waiting warily till her back was turned, Sam stooped, seized it, and slipped it into his pocket, a treasure of unspeakable price.

"Hi, missis," called the errand-boy shrilly, "the bloke be'ind you's got yer sovereign! I see 'im pick it up an' pouch it!"

The Fog Girl straightened herself and looked straight at Sam, who blushed like a boy as he met her clear, direct gaze.

"Have you found my sovereign?" she said. The dimples appeared for a moment as she spoke, but the pucker in her smooth white brow deepened more ominously than before.

Sam shook his head and raised his frayed cap.

"I'm sorry—I haven't," he faltered.

"'E 'as, missis. I see 'im pick it up, I tell yer," asserted the boy.

"I did nothing of the sort," said Sam, in a tone of mingled amusement and annoyance.

"Well, *I* see you pick something up, old sport," said the loafer, "and you can't deny it."

"I don't," replied Sam loftily, resenting the loafer's intimate manner, and not realising at the moment that his own appearance justified it. "I admit I picked something up, but it was not the sovereign."

"What was it then, mate?" remarked the loafer, with his air of *bon camaradie* still evident, but fading.

"That's my business," retorted Sam shortly.

The loafer's moral attitude changed.

"I'll make it mine!" he said. And,

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nodding his head fiercely, he added: "Give the lidy 'er quid, or——"

"Excuse me," said the Fog Girl, interrupting at this point, and addressing the loafer, "I am perfectly well able to look after this business, if you will kindly leave it to me."

The loafer stared, but there was something in that unusually resolute face and the square set of the dogged little chin that impressed him.

"Orl right, I'll leave it to you with pleasure. If you'd *'a said* you was a Suffragette, to start with, I wouldn't 'a' interfered."

"That'll do," said Sam, taking a step towards him. "Be off with you!" And, being a small man, the loafer obeyed.

But the Fog Girl seemed in no way softened towards her big, if unshaven, champion, as she remarked in a cold, hard voice—

"I'm convinced you did pick up my sovereign, and it will be much better for you to give it to me at once."

"I can't do that," replied Sam, "much as I should like to, because I haven't got it."

"But you admit you picked something up. What was that, please?"

Sam blushed furiously. "I'd rather not say," he said. "It was something rather private."

"That's absurd!" retorted the Fog Girl in her cocksure way. "I'm not going to believe *that* for a second."

"Shall I fetch a copper for you, lidy?" suggested the errand-boy, with a joyous note in his shrill voice.

"Shall he?" said the Fog Girl haughtily, turning to Sam.

Sam shrugged his shoulders.

"Certainly, if you wish," he replied; "but I think you will be sorry if you do."

For a moment the Fog Girl hesitated. The affair was horribly unpleasant, and it is possible she might have shirked it and walked away sovereignless if Sam's last remark had not roused her fighting spirit, and if also a constable had not at that moment turned into the main road from a by-street not ten yards away. The sight of the constable's calm, fleshy countenance, ornamented with a much-admired military moustache, decided her to see the thing through and punish this paltry petty felon.

"Constable," she said, slightly raising her voice, "this man has picked up a sovereign that belongs to me, and refuses to return it."

"I see 'im with me eyes," reiterated the errand-boy.

"I was riding on the top of a tram," continued the Fog Girl, ignoring the interruption, "and dropped the sovereign on the floor; it rolled through a crack at the side on to the road. This man"—indicating Sam with an imperious wave of her hand—"followed me when I got off to look for it. Two people saw him find it, but he refused to give it up."

The constable looked at Sam, who lamely repeated his defence that he *had* picked up something, but *not* the sovereign.

"What was it, then?" questioned the constable.

"I decline to say," said Sam.

"Then you'd better come along to the station," said the constable. And, as a matter of fact, Sam went, accompanied by the constable and the prosecutrix, to the satisfaction of the gathering crowd, which again included the loafer, who had returned to see justice faithfully carried out, now that the thief was under proper control.

From Sam's point of view, the fun was going a little too far; it was, in fact, becoming more awkward than ridiculous, particularly when, at the station, the constables who searched him found a sovereign amongst some halfpence in the very first pocket they came to. Sam, who was familiar with the careless ways of people afflicted with artistic temperaments, saw nothing extraordinary in this discovery, but to the rest it was proof positive of his guilt.

"But that's *my* sovereign," said Sam; "I always carry gold loose with coppers."

"Yes, you look like it," said the grizzled inspector, and Sam glanced down at his torn, disreputable mackintosh.

"Oh, I just caught hold of this thing off the hat-rail by chance, as I was in a hurry," he said.

"Oh, yes!" said the grizzled inspector. "And whose hat-rail was it, I wonder?"

"My own," replied Sam shortly.

"Indeed, and why were you in such a hurry?"—in the same significant but genial tone.

"Because—er—because——" faltered Sam, shooting an embarrassed glance at the Fog Girl. "Oh, well, I'd rather not say, but I had a very good reason."

"No doubt, no doubt," agreed the inspector. "I believe there is no time to be lost on these occasions."

The constables sniggered, for the inspector's witticisms always demanded

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recognition on their part; but the Fog Girl looked grave, and she looked even graver when she left the police-station ten minutes later with the consciousness that she had scored all round, and yet unable to stifle a regret that so good-looking a felon should be detained for inquiries on her account

"'Yes, they *are* useful things.'"

Locked in his prison cell, Sam reviewed the situation with a bitter sense of humour and a great longing for a pipe. He had refused to give his name and address for the moment, anyhow, and had also declined to send to his friends to come and exculpate him. There was plenty of time for that, he reflected, but he heartily hoped some other alternative might arise, for though he felt he had been a fool, he had no wish to become the laughing-stock of his set. A mackintosh is poor comfort to withstand the rigours of temperature in a prison cell, but though his fingers were very cold and his heart hot with resentment, nevertheless he fumbled in his pocket, and a look of joy overspread his face as he drew out a stump of pencil and a scrap of paper; and, standing under the window, for there was little light in the place, he began to draw rapidly. Yes, he'd got it all right this time—the long, lovely, oval face, the pucker between the eyebrows, the direct, youthful gaze, the dogged chin, the sweet, babyish mouth *and* the dimples. In fact, lost to his sorry surroundings and absorbed in his delightful task, he was just correcting the position of the left cheek dimple, when the cell door opened once more, and the constable with the military moustache requested him to follow. Sam complied, and half-way down the whitewashed passage he heard a voice that once again sent a thrill through him, and once again paled his unshaven cheeks as he entered the inspector's room.

The Fog Girl stood by that grizzled officer; her face was flushed and distressed, and her eyes met his with a pitiful pathos.

"This lady," said the inspector, "has returned to say that she has found her sovereign, and wishes to withdraw her charge."

"I suddenly remembered," said the Fog Girl, haughty no longer, but agitated and exceedingly humble, "that I had put it in

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a little pocket inside my muff for safety. But I forgot all about that on the tram, and thought I must have dropped it. I *am* so sorry—I can't say *how* sorry!"

Sam smiled. All through the whole affair he had hoped for this emotional moment.

"Not at all," he said simply. "I quite understood it was a mistake, and I was distressed for your sake far more than for my own."

The Fog Girl's forehead puckered.

"You are very, very kind," she said, and listened with bowed head to the inspector's long-winded rebukes on the criminal folly of making these careless mistakes, until Sam cut short his remarks, and in a very few minutes found himself walking down the road with a very silent and depressed Fog Girl at his side.

"Of course," he said, "it was my fault, too; there were certain things which lent colour to your natural suspicions, but which I couldn't explain."

"Oh, don't try to make it easier for me!" she exclaimed penitently. "It's my horrible cocksureness that was to blame. It gets me into all sorts of scrapes."

"Such as riding your bicycle on the *path* in a fog," said Sam, smiling, "and accusing the pedestrians you run down of being in the *road*."

With an ejaculation of amazement, she wheeled round and stared at him, and a glorious colour suffused her face.

"I *wondered* where I had heard your voice!" she ejaculated. "Was it—was it really you?"

"I was afraid you might have forgotten about it," said Sam.

She shook her head.

"I've wanted to thank you a hundred times," she said. "Oh, and to think how I have behaved to you to-day!"

"Which also happens to be my birthday," commented Sam.

The pucker on her forehead deepened—the lips went down piteously.

"Really and truly your birthday?" faltered the Fog Girl. Then, to his intense horror, the long, lovely face grew all creased and puckered, and two great tears overflowed and chased each other down her quivering cheeks.

"Oh," ejaculated Sam in an agonised voice, "don't—don't cry! It's all right really. Why, I wouldn't have missed this morning for worlds! It's been the best birthday I've ever had!" And in a torrent of words, partly to relieve his own feelings, but mostly to relieve hers, he told her how he had seen her on the top of the tram, how he had followed with the hope of renewing the acquaintance, and he spoke so eloquently that by the time he had come to the incident of the hairpin, the tears had been furtively dried, and their owner was listening, too absorbed in the story, to notice the little sob that caught her breath now and then. But Sam noticed it, and his heart melted like water at the sound.

"And when I saw something shining on the ground," he continued, "I picked it up when you weren't looking, and meant to keep it, but now I await your permission." And he drew the hairpin out of his pocket.

Again her cheeks grew pink, but this time the tears in her eyes were substituted by a twinkle.

"Yes, they *are* useful things," she said casually. "I'll buy you a penny packet for a birthday present."

"No," said Sam, "I only want this one; and if you say I may keep it, I promise you it shall be my most precious possession."

"Oh, yes, that's quite likely," she laughed, "until you get something more precious."

Sam nodded, and with his eyes on hers, he said gravely—

"Yes, exactly—till I get something more precious."

And, as a matter of fact, when, in less than three months, he *did* possess something more precious, there were so many gilt hairpins scattered about his brand-new honeymoon house, that familiarity bred—well, not contempt, but indifference.

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THE PROPOSAL.

By A. HAMILTON GIBBS.

ON Dieu! Mon Dieu! Zese stairs!" Madame Lemonnier, ample of bosom, short of breath, laboured up the narrow staircase of the house in the depths of Soho to the rooms of her only lodger. She carried a letter in one fat hand, and grasped the banisters with the other. A strong smell of fried onions wafted up to her from the lower regions, and she smacked her lips in anticipation. Arrived outside a door on the first landing, she paused a moment to regain her breath, and then knocked. No answer came from inside. Madame turned the handle and waddled in.

"Pardon, m'sieur," she said. "I deed not tink you were 'ere." She crossed over to where her lodger was sitting, with a pipe between his teeth, and his legs upon the mantelpiece. "Zere is a letter for you," she added.

The man made no answer.

Madame looked at him in surprise. As a rule, whenever she toiled up to his room, he sat at the desk writing, writing, and the pages, filled with curious figures and signs, lay in a pile at his side. Why did he not give her his usual cheery greeting, his word of friendly chaff?

"*Tiens! Tiens!*" she murmured. "Ze English, zey are so droll! One day zey converse, ze next, noting at all—not a word! . . . M'sieur enjoy 'is *petit déjeuner?*" she asked, with her head on one side and her hands on her hips. Again there was no reply. The lodger was puffing out clouds of smoke, and his eyes were fixed in space.

Madame raised her hands to heaven, placed the letter on the table, and retreated softly, her lips moving in silent wonder, her eyes large with questioning. Down the stairs she went again, and marched into the kitchen bursting with the news.

"Pierre," she said to her husband, who sat in his shirt-sleeves beside the deal table, reading *Le Rire*—"Pierre, you 'ave notice M'sieur Sackville zese last weeks?"

"*Hein?*" Pierre looked up carefully. He was a waiter, and it did not do to make sudden movements in a shirt that was in its fifth day of service. "*Qu'est-ce qu'il y a?*"

"Vat is it that it is?" cried Madame. "It is that m'sieur no longer smile and laugh, and say '*Bonjour, Madame!*' ven I go in. No. 'E sit wiz 'is pipe and ze long face, and make no answer at all to me." She leaned towards her better half and wagged a finger in his face. "Is he ill? No, 'e 'as still ze *appétit pas mal.*" She placed her hand to her bosom. "It is 'ere 'e suffer. Ah, yes, 'e is in love! It is *l'amour!*"

L'amour? Perhaps plump little Madame was right. Why not? Gerald Sackville, her lodger, young, well-built, with a square chin, a straight nose, and a mighty ambition—why should he not be in love? If anybody were in a position to know, surely it was Madame Lemonnier. Had he not been with her for three years? Was it not she who helped him to hang up those photographs, all framed in brown oak, of groups of men, all with their hair carefully parted in the middle, all revealing lengths of bare brown arms and legs—*le sport, non?* Had she not thrown up her arms in horror at the sight of a long oar, with a wonderfully painted blade, which hung over the door, and touched each end of the room? Had she not cooked his food, served it, darned his socks, dusted his athletic trophies, and been introduced to his friends? Had she not looked after him like a mother during those three long years during which Gerald Sackville, M.D., had been struggling to work up a practice among the foreigners of the quarter? During all that time she had known him clear-eyed, hard-working, always with a cheery laugh and a joke on his lips.

And now, for some weeks, instead of poring over tubes filled with strange-coloured fluids, and trays of sticky gelatine—*juste ciel*, 'ow 'orrible!—he had shown a fondness for putting his feet on the mantelpiece and dreaming away his time. As for the afternoons, Madame saw him go forth in his best

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clothes—*endimanché tous les jours, sapristi!*—and the verdict was love.

As she finished telling her husband, the street-door bell rang. Madame did her best to hurry and open it.

"Ha, ha, Madame! Is he up there?" asked a clear English voice.

"*Bonjour*, M'sieur Wantage!" said Madame, beaming with smiles. "But yes, 'e is zere. *Montez, montez!*"

She knew Wantage well, and liked him, and looked forward to his frequent visits. Coffee for two made a useful little extra for her weekly bill.

"You look as well as ever, Madame," said Wantage, as he swung up the narrow staircase.

"Thank the good God, yes, m'sieur," replied Madame.

But by the time her sentence was complete, Dick Wantage was outside Gerald's door. He beat on it with his fist, and, without waiting, went in with the intimacy begotten of an Oxford friendship. "Hallo, hallo!" he cried. "Gerald, you rotter, why didn't you turn up last night?"

Gerald swung his feet down from the mantelpiece and his thoughts from the clouds. "Hallo, Dick," he said, "what's the row?"

Wantage helped himself to tobacco from a large crest-emblazoned jar.

"You've absolutely put me in the cart," he said. "My sister and her friend both came, and we waited for you in the foyer until the curtain was going up. Then we gave you up as a bad job. As they had been asked specially for you to meet them, I should like to hear what you have to say by way of apology."

"By Jove, I'm most awfully sorry!" said Gerald. "What happened was this: Two Frenchmen, with about half a dozen knife cuts on each of them, turned up here about six o'clock, and it took me quite an hour to strap them up. They were rather messy."

"But couldn't you have come straight along afterwards?"

"Well, to be absolutely candid," said Gerald, "I clean forgot all about it. I had one or two important things on my mind, and—and, you know, old man, these bacilli are the very devil for the amount of attention they require."

"No good," said Dick. "You've got to lie down and crawl."

Gerald laughed. "I do," he said. "I apologise abjectly. Please ask your sister to forgive me."

Wantage had been quietly looking round the room in some astonishment. Instead of the usual untidiness—medical books lying anywhere, instruments higgledy-piggledy on a little side-table among test tubes, phials of acids, pestle and mortar, and all the paraphernalia which Gerald used every day—the room was horribly neat and tidy. The instruments were lying in decorous rows; behind them stood the phials, equally primly arranged; and the books were placed in orderly piles on the shelves.

Wantage peered curiously at his friend. "Feeling seedy?" he asked.

Gerald stopped filling a pipe and looked up in surprise. "Seedy? No. Why?"

"Do you want to borrow some money?" asked Wantage.

"What *are* you driving at?" laughed Gerald. "The practice is bringing in quite a decent little income, and my germ experiments are going very strong. Why this catechism?"

Wantage waved a pipe. "Look at all this," he said.

The doctor looked round. "All this what?"

"This tidiness, this method, this handiwork of Madame your landlady. You don't appear to have done a stroke of work for ages. All that, combined with your unusual lapse of memory, means *something*. What *have* you been doing these last three weeks?"

Gerald's eyebrows met in a frown. He moved over to the mantelpiece and struck a match. "I'm dashed if I know!" he said. "But you're quite right—it does mean something. I'm off work—quite unable to settle down—and I've been sitting in the Park every afternoon."

"In the Park!" Wantage yelled with laughter. "What on earth is there to see in the Park?"

"Oh, green trees, and crocuses, and nursemaids, and babies, and things."

"Babies and things!" echoed Wantage. "I say, old man, you've been overdoing it; you want a holiday."

Gerald did not appear to hear. He continued dreamily: "And the girl with the tiny brown mole didn't turn up yesterday, dash my luck!"

"The girl? What girl?" Wantage began to take a keen interest.

"I don't know," said Gerald—"I've never met her."

Wantage rose, walked solemnly across to his friend, and laid his hand on his shoulder. "Gerald, old man," he said, "you're in love."

"In love?" Gerald blinked at him for

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several moments in equal solemnity, as if he did not understand.

Then suddenly an expression of utter surprise came over his face. It was followed by a look of joy and a broad grin. "In love? By Jove, of course I am!" He seized Wantage's hand and wrung it. "Dick, old boy, you've got it! You've scored a goal!" And he broke away, burst into a great laugh, and went into a wild whirling of arms and legs—a dance which put the chairs and table into the gravest danger.

Wantage was amazed. He had known Gerald ever since they were fellow-undergraduates of St. John's College. They had been progged together, had rowed one behind the other in the college boat, and had celebrated wonderful bump suppers, but never had Gerald been so mad before.

"You say you don't know her," he said. "What's she like?"

"Like?" Gerald stopped dancing at once. "Like?" he repeated. "She's like an angel! She's like a tulip, a daffodil——"

"Oh, I know all about that!" cried Wantage. "They all are. But what are her striking points? Does she squint, or has she got a gammy leg?"

"Oh, look here," cried Gerald protestingly, "in ordinary prose she's about my height, has two brown eyes, a nose with the most perfect tilt to it, and a little, tiny, brown mole on her left cheek. My dear chap, she's—— But you know her, man! I saw you with her at the Horse Show."

Wantage thought for a moment, and then gave an exclamation of surprise. "The girl who goes about with a small boy who limps and looks very delicate and thin?" he asked quickly.

"Yes," said Gerald eagerly.

Wantage smiled. "Why, it's Audrey Royce! The little chap's her brother. They're orphans, and so she takes her mother's place. My dear old boy, I'll introduce you. I know her well. She's great pals with my sister."

But Gerald held up his hand. "Dick," he said, "you're one of the very best, but you mustn't introduce me."

"But if you're in love with her?" said Dick.

"In love!" Gerald's voice was full of emotion. He linked his friend's arm in his own. "Old man," he said gravely, "for the last three weeks I *have* been slacking. I've started out to come and look you up, and found myself, to my horror, sitting on a penny chair, gazing at her face—her great brown eyes. Great Scot! Why, in every book I open, her face appears on every page! She gets between my eyes and the stuff I try to mug up about these blessed bacilli, until work is absolutely impossible. She makes me cut myself when I shave, and forget your theatre parties——"

Wantage interrupted. "Well, then, my dear sir, come and let me introduce you to her."

"Never in this world!" said Gerald. "You've known me since I was twenty. *You* know that with girls I don't shine. Remember our last eights, and that awful day on the river? Dick, old man, it's no earthly. If you introduced me, I should inevitably propose to her, and she, being an angel, would metaphorically punch me in the neck and refuse me. I couldn't stand it! She's too good for a poor devil like me."

"But——"

"No, it can't be done. I love her, and always shall love her, but it'll have to be a Dante and Beatrice affair. I'd a million times rather go on worshipping her from a safe distance than have to chuck all idea of her after having been dismissed. Do you take my point?"

Wantage remained silent. A curious smile came over his face, and a look of determination appeared in his eyes. "I see," he said. "Right O."

"I knew you'd tumble," said Gerald.

"Of course," said Wantage. He rose. "I must be going. So long!"

"So long!" said Gerald; and Wantage, still with that curious smile on his face, went down the stairs four at a time.

Madame met him at the bottom. "M'sieur Sackville, 'e suffer 'ere?" she asked, pointing to her bosom.

"Eh," said Wantage — "suffer? How do you mean?" Madame was so robust that it was impossible to think that she was directing his attention to her heart.

"*C'est l'amour, n'est-ce pas?*" she asked.

Wantage went into a fit of laughter. "Oh, that's great!" he said. "Madame, you are a psychologist."

Madame shook her head as she watched him go out. "I do not know vat a—vat it is 'e said, but I am right. Ah, *mais oui!*"

* * * * *

During the next month Gerald discovered the meaning of his friend's enigmatical smile. Hardly a day passed without his receiving from Wantage an invitation either to a dance, a lunch party, a theatre, a tea, or

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some such function. He went to the first two or three in all good faith, but, to his horror, no sooner had he put his head in the door of the room or stage box in which the party was, than he saw the girl, Audrey Royce.

They were deliberate, planned attempts to bring them together, and Gerald only got out of them by lame excuses as to forgotten work, a liver attack, or by ignominious flight. But the invitations came in steadily, not only from Wantage, but from other friends. Several times Gerald was half inclined to yield and meet the angel of his dreams, the destroyer of his bacilli. But always he grew firm again at the appalling thought of being refused when he should propose to her, and propose he knew he should have to.

At last he became almost annoyed at Wantage's persistent efforts. He decided to take a holiday, or, rather, to have a change of scene. He would take his books and go on working. He asked Madame's advice on the subject, and was promptly urged to go to St. Malo. Madame was a Malouine, and possessed an undying and emotional affection for the town of her birth. She never spoke of it without her eyes filling with tears. She insisted that the little fortified seaside town was the one place on earth—and doubtless it had its replica in Heaven—to which Gerald should go.

So Gerald, not much caring where he went, so long as the sun shone and the sea was good for bathing, packed up a kit-bag, dashed a line to Dick, and, after an affectionate farewell to Madame, departed without more ado. His boat drew into the harbour about six o'clock next morning. Already the sun sparkled on the water and shone warmly on the beautiful white spire of the cathedral, which shot up in the middle of the jagged skyline of roofs and fortifications clustering round it. In spite of the early hour, the quay was a mass of yelling *camionneurs*, commissionaires of hotels, cabdrivers, loafers, and the usual picturesque riff-raff which always greets the incoming boats. Gerald settled on the Hotel de France et de Chateaubriand, in the middle of Paramé, it being not quite so odoriferous as the hotels in St. Malo proper.

The weather was gloriously hot. Daily he swam from the rocks of Rothéneuf, and dried, like some primitive man, naked in the sands. He explored the old cathedral town, venturing down the narrow back streets, getting into conversation with old furniture dealers, and picking up one or two quaint things. He went into the dim aisles of the cathedral and saw white-hooded nuns dotted here and there in the gloom. The atmosphere of the holy place moved him strangely, and when he came out into the sunshine once more, he found himself moralising on the littleness of humanity.

He went for long walks, and met the *douanier* high up on the cliff, and supplied him with caporals in exchange for an hour's conversation.

As he sat there about six o'clock one evening, an enormous cloud crept slowly up the horizon. Everything was very still. The sea was like a pond, and there was a hushed, stuffy feeling in the air. Gerald, supposedly studying a newly-published work on the latest microbe experiments, but actually thinking of Audrey, and wishing to goodness that he stood the ghost of a chance, saw the cloud sweeping up. He felt that there was going to be one of the biggest storms he would ever see, and, deciding that it would be worth watching, he rose and climbed down the cliffs to the seashore.

There were, he knew, many deep slits and caves down there which would keep him dry-coated and yet enable him to watch everything. Even as he was climbing down, the first drops fell—drops the size of half-pennies—and the sun disappeared slowly and unwillingly. Suddenly, without any warning, a clap of thunder like ten thousand shells bursting at once broke the creepy silence.

Gerald dived into a long, deep cave and began to fill another pipe. The inside of the cave, dark even in daytime, became almost pitch black as the clouds gathered together in heaps and put out the daylight. Rain fell in a sheet, and lightning in vivid streaks across the whole heavens heralded each crackling split of thunder.

"Whew!" whistled Gerald softly. "This is great! Look at the sea!"

The tide was almost full, and already mountainous waves dashed for the shore and hurled themselves against the rocks. "Best thing I've ever seen," thought Gerald, feeling for his matches. "Hallo, what the——"

The entrance to the cavern was suddenly blocked up, and a panting girl, wringing-wet and practically exhausted, dashed in and fell in a sobbing heap almost at Gerald's feet. Beyond the fact that the person was a female, Gerald could make out nothing in the darkness. "Fancy being frightened of a storm!"

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"'You!' he cried."

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he thought. "Anyhow, she must be comforted. Mademoiselle," he began in his best French, which was very English, "*je vous prie de ne pas pleurer. C'est*—— What's the bally word for child's play?"

The frightened girl gave a little cry on hearing a man's voice. She had thought herself alone, but the presence of someone else, although a stranger, gave her courage. "Oh, I am so wet and cold!" she said.

"Thank Heaven, you're English!" said Gerald. "Look here, please don't cry. It's only a summer storm, and the whole thing'll be over in half an hour."

Another burst of thunder put a full stop to the end of his sentence. The girl cowered with her hands over her ears.

"Help!" thought Gerald. "What on earth would Sir Galahad have done under the circumstances? Here goes!" He felt his way over to her, slipped an arm round her waist, and lifted her to her feet. "Please trust me," he said. "Let me help you farther into the cave. You'll get wetter still if you stay here. Half a second, and I'll strike a match. The floor's pretty rocky."

With one arm still round her, he felt for a match, found a dry spot on the wall of the cave, and struck it. The little flame spurted up, making a halo of light in the blackness, and Gerald saw two brown eyes and a little brown mole.

"You!" he cried.

"Mr. Sackville!" cried Audrey.

"How do you know my name," demanded Gerald fiercely, "when I've never been introduced to you? Dash the thing!" The match had burnt his fingers, and he threw it down.

Once more they were in a darkness, for which Audrey at least was profoundly thankful. She felt a warm blush covering her face, and the man's arm was still holding her tightly. "How do you know who I am?" she asked, evading Gerald's question.

"Dick Wantage told me about you," answered Gerald.

"And it was he who told me about you," said Audrey softly, with a tender smile.

But Gerald could not see the smile. He was busy suspecting Dick. It was quite on the cards that he had been ass enough to tell her——

"What did he tell you about me?"

"Oh, lots of things." Audrey's voice was quite casual. "For instance, he told me that you were the Oxford friend who was working among the poor people in Soho, and also that you—went—a great deal to the Park."

"Weren't you fearfully annoyed at my ghastly rudeness?" asked Gerald humbly. "It was really your fault, you know. *You* dragged me there." He struck another match quickly. "For months I've succeeded in escaping an introduction to you. Dick and all his schemes failed, and now here we are in a slit in the earth. It's Fate. I—I——"

Another enormous crash of thunder sent a shiver through the girl. She hid her face on Gerald's shoulder.

"Audrey," he said—"Audrey!" And as his arm tightened round her wet little figure, he caught the whispered echo of his name.

He bent down, and—the match went out.

JUNE.

INTO the meadows you came,
With sweet youth a-glowing
And love overflowing,
The pansies whispered your name,
And a fragrance stole from the briar;
Over the coppice you sped,
Woke it to beauty,
Its joy and its duty,
The rose tree flushed to a red,
And laburnum leaped into fire.

Your blue eyes shone o'er the lea,
The larkspur was sighing,
The swallows were flying,
Your clear voice, fresh as the sea,
Stirred the melodious wold;
Your white arms shadowed the rills,
Over and under,
With moonlight and wonder,
Your fair hair rained on the hills,
And left them a glory of gold.

ARTHUR COMPTON-RICKETT.

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RED DANDY AND MacTAVISH.

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS,

Author of "Neighbours Unknown," "The House in the Water," "Kings in Exile," etc.

THE first of the dawn lay pink and dewy chill along the naked, tilted crest of the Ridge. Slowly it crept down the scarred rocks, washed softly over the tangled thickets, and at last shot its thin, aerial rays of light and colour down the glades and under the branches of the ash, chestnut, and maples, just filming with their earliest spring green.

Into a deep little hollow last it came—a hollow carpeted with dry twigs, half choked with vine and bramble, and overhung by the branches of two enormous chestnuts. It was so secret a hollow that the long, pink fingers of light felt their way in with difficulty, and seemed to grope for a while before finding anything to reveal. At last, however, they did find something, and immediately, as if pleased at the discovery, they lit up the hollow with a sudden flush of pale rose-amber.

What the delicate light revealed was a young fawn, whose immense, mild, liquid eyes met it wonderingly. Curled up under a bush, his red-tawny coat, mottled with cream yellow, made him, as a rule, almost indistinguishable from his bed of mottled brown leaves. But that peculiar, crystalline yet tinted light of earliest dawn made him suddenly conspicuous. After a moment or two of wonder, he seemed to become aware that he was no longer invisible. He dropped his baby head between his hooves, and appeared to shrink into a guarded immobility. It was almost as if by sheer unconscious volition his colours became less bright, and he began to fade, through mere stillness, back into his surroundings.

But that instant's motion, the lowering of his head, had been enough to make trouble. It had caught the attention of a pair of vigilant and cruel eyes at the upper edge of the hollow. A prowling, shadowy-grey shape, as noiseless as the motion of the dawn itself, crouched suddenly flat to earth and glared down with terrible intentness at the ruddy, mottled little form beneath the bush. A second shadowy shape, with similar pale, piercing, moon-like eyes, stole up and crouched beside the first.

They were sinister-looking beasts, the two lynxes, each nearly forty pounds in weight, with immense, panther-like paws, and muscles like steel moving swiftly under their loose, long fur. Their hind-quarters were of exaggerated size and power as compared with the fore-quarters, and their hind legs were gathered under them, ready for an instant spring, in such a fashion as to suggest some monstrous and predatory hare. Their tails were mere thick stubs, apparently quite futile as far as concerned all customary uses of a tail. Their round, malign faces were fiercely whiskered, surrounded by a sort of ruff of long fur curling forward from beneath the jaws, and their ears were tipped with long, stiff tufts. In colour they were of a light grey, powdered vaguely with a pale yellow-brown—a colouring which made them all but invisible in the shadowed woods, except for the startling brilliancy of their wide, pale eyes.

Both lynxes stared unwinkingly for a few long seconds at the unconscious fawn, whose mild eyes were turned in another direction, watching anxiously for his mother's return. All at once, though not a sound, a whisper, had come to his ears, some subtle warning thrilled his baby nerves, and he turned his head to glance behind him.

Two dim, grey things, with dreadful eyes fixed upon his, were creeping down into the hollow.

The fawn was not many hours old. He had so far learned nothing, either of lynxes or of death. But he needed no learning to know that those two dim shapes meant doom. Opening wide his narrow muzzle, he cried out for his mother—a strange, strident cry, half bleat, half yelp, but quite unmistakable in its terror and its appeal.

The cry was answered instantly by a clear belling from close at hand, and almost in the next second the mother doe arrived,

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coming in one tremendous leap clean over the nearest bushes. It was not by any means her customary way of coming home. On other occasions she would drift in silently, not so much as snapping a twig. But when danger threatened her little one, she threw prudence to the breezes and came by the shortest road.

With a soft little murmur of reassurance, the red mother nosed her fawn, sniffing it all over as if to ask what ailed it. It was shivering, and after a few moments she looked up, glancing about to see what had so frightened it.

At the sudden, vehement appearance of the doe, both lynxes had stopped abruptly, crouching in readiness for whatever might take place. When they saw the mother's head bent low, and all her attention absorbed in the little one, they again stole forward. But now they separated, one creeping to the right, the other to the left. They knew that a mother deer, in the protection of her young, was an antagonist too formidable for one lynx alone to engage; but, by attacking her on both flanks at once, they trusted to confuse her, and so avoid the lightning strokes of her dangerous, knife-edged hooves.

When the doe lifted her head to look around, she saw the implacable eyes of the male lynx, not fifteen feet away, just gathering himself for the spring. Experienced in battle, she did not wait for that deadly pounce, but, with a shrill snort of defiance, she leaped to meet it, dancing forward with indescribable lightness, her polished, pointed hooves, hard as steel, striking out savagely before her.

With a snarl, the lynx jumped backwards, not daring to face the strokes. Instinctively the doe glanced behind her, to see that the little one was still safe. The she lynx was in the very motion of springing upon her. She was not in time to evade the spring, but she was in time to meet it ineffectually with one short, cutting stroke. Such a stroke could not stop the great cat's pounce, already launched, but it ripped a long red gash down the grey flank, and so diverted the attack that the assailant's claws were sunk into the shoulders of their prey, instead of into the throat.

With a sharp belling, the doe leaped into the air, striving to shake her assailant off. Finding this effort vain, she darted under a branch, hoping to scrape the fatal rider from her place. In this she was successful; but before she could turn and defend herself again, the male lynx had her by the throat, strangling her. The next moment the female was again upon her shoulders, tearing at her neck and ripping her flank with those eviscerating hinder claws. She belled chokingly, and struggled with desperate, plunging leaps. But in a couple of minutes the lynxes had borne her down, and in a few seconds more her life-blood was flooding forth scarlet and hot upon the withered leaves.

II.

MACTAVISH sat on the very peak of the Ridge, and stared with calm eyes into the spreading miracle of the dawn. In the crook of his left arm rested his handy ·303, its blued barrel gleaming in the clean, thin radiance. His big right hand fingered his red beard complacently. That sunrise seemed to him just as it should be. The faint rose tints, the amber, the gold, of a transparency altogether inexplicable and almost unbelievable, played along his rugged but fine-strung nerves like the long, slow notes of a fiddle beside a still water under a mid-summer moon.

Scotch, Welsh, and English in his veins, MacTavish was a mixture more or less enigmatic even to himself. He shrank from hurting anything, yet he was a keen hunter, and he loved a good fight. On his way from his cabin in to the Settlement, twenty miles away across the valley, he had started up the western slope a half-hour earlier than was necessary—quite in the dark, in fact—just in order to see the first of the sunrise from the crest of the Ridge, its celestial flood breaking over the wide valley below him. But he would not acknowledge to himself that this was his reason for coming up so early. He had several other reasons ready, but he knew in his heart that they had no weight at all. They only served to veil to himself this guilty passion of his for sunrises and sunsets, and other beautiful but practically useless affairs.

Never, thought MacTavish, tugging at his red beard with slow intensity of enjoyment, had he seen that great view from the Ridge more entrancing, never a sunrise that was more perfect in its sorcery. He hardly dared to breathe, lest it should change in a flash to some other and less lovely a combination of tones. The stillness was almost terrible in its perfection—as it were of an infinite bubble blown to its utmost limit and colouring by a miracle.

And then it broke. From the hollow below came a medley of furious sounds—snarls, cries, strugglings—the unmistakable utterance of a life-and-death encounter. The

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mystic light upon the rocks, the thickets, the greening trees, suddenly changed, became more familiar, more ordinary, something almost in the line of the day's routine return. MacTavish drew a long breath, as of one released from a strong spell. He snatched up his rifle, and darted swiftly but quietly down the slope to the bushy hollow where the sounds seemed to come from.

The faithful mother had ceased struggling, and the lynxes, not yet quite assured of their victory, were both tearing ferociously at her throat when MacTavish appeared. With harsh snarls—enraged beyond all discretion at this interference in the hour of victory—they turned and confronted him, as if almost minded to try conclusions with him. Up went MacTavish's handy gun, and the male lynx sprang straight into the air, with all four legs stretched rigid, to fall back, relaxed and sprawling, across the neck of his victim. Before he was fairly down, the female was gone—simply vanishing, as if the report of the rifle had blown her away. MacTavish saw no more of her than an instant's drift of grey between one thicket and another.

MacTavish picked up his trophy, appraised it with skilled eye as a good pelt, then flung it down carelessly, a little chagrined at not having been quick enough to secure both the grey marauders. He examined the doe to make sure she was quite dead, produced a few yards of stout cord from his capacious pocket, and strung the body up by the hind legs to a branch overhead, out of the way of the foxes. Then he turned to the fawn.

The little animal had been watching, from its place, with immense blank eyes of stupefaction. So many sudden horrors had left it numb in its utter incomprehension. When MacTavish gently went up to it, holding out his hand, it hardly even shrank away. But when he indiscreetly laid his hand upon its muzzle, the dreaded man-smell shocked it, and it struggled to its feet, repeating that strident and piteous cry of appeal to the mother who was now so deaf to it. Feebly it strove to get away. But MacTavish had it fast. He held it firmly, but he stroked it gently, rubbing its back and its neck. And presently, puzzled, but in part reassured by the smell of its mother, which blended so curiously with the man-smell on MacTavish's clothes, it stopped its strange cries and lay still in the hunter's arms, looking at him with eyes of anxious inquiry.

"Poor wee beastie!" murmured MacTavish, holding it as tenderly as if it had been a human baby. And then, remembering his beloved Burns: "'Wee sleekit, quiverin', timorous beastie!"

For a few moments he stood hesitating. He had set out to pay a visit to the Settlement, and he was not one to lightly change his plans. But the needs of the little animal were a peremptory demand on his understanding heart. Another day would do for the trip to the Settlement. He slung the dead lynx over his shoulder, settled the fawn more or less comfortably in his left arm, and started back for his cabin, on the other side of the Ridge.

III.

IN MacTavish's snug cabin, tended and petted, the fawn speedily forgot the horrors which had surrounded its first appearance on the stage of life. It learned at once to drink warm cow's milk, and a little later to browse, not only on the grass of MacTavish's pasture-clearing, but also on the choicest vegetable products of his little garden. MacTavish spoiled it shockingly, but it rewarded him with a dog-like devotion that might almost at times have seemed a nuisance. It was for ever at his heels, and as it seemed constitutionally incapable of learning obedience, whenever he did not wish to be followed he had to shut it up securely in the barn, and turn a deaf ear to its terrible, penetrating appeals.

In course of months the little one's coat lost its creamy spots and became all a rich, tawny red, shading to pale buff on the underparts, and he grew up into a particularly handsome and high-stepping young buck. It was then that his name was changed from "Beastie" to "Red Dandy." Gradually now he got to be on fair terms, not friendly, but condescendingly tolerant terms, with the black-and-white cow, the yearling calf, and the two big, sleepy, carrot-coloured oxen who did MacTavish's ploughing and hauling. When his first horns began to sprout, he gradually established an uncontested supremacy over all these easy-going folk of the farmyard. In spite of his slimness and his small stature, he had them at a complete disadvantage, for he could always prod them where he liked, or buffet them cruelly with his fore-hooves, and then evade their resentment with scornful ease. So, to save themselves trouble, they gave way to his tyranny until it became a habit with them. This domination, no doubt, was rendered easier for him to secure by reason of the terms of favour on which he lived with MacTavish. Spending half his time in the cabin, trotting

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at MacTavish's heels, or at his side with MacTavish's arm over his back, the other animals easily came to regard him as sharing some small measure of MacTavish's authority. It was perhaps a fortunate thing for all concerned that there was no dog or cat about the place to divide MacTavish's affections, for Red Dandy was as jealous as a Spanish gipsy.

Red Dandy, as he developed into a full-sized, high-antlered buck, developed also two antipathies — towards the pig and towards all snakes. For the first there was no apparent reason, and, whenever he was caught manifesting it, he got a sharp horse-whipping from MacTavish, which would send him off snorting to sulk for perhaps ten minutes behind the barn. He used to stand beside the pen and thrust at the unoffending grunter through the cracks. To avoid accidents, MacTavish ran the walls of the stye to a discouraging height, and nailed up the cracks between the boards.

When this was done, Red Dandy appeared to forget the existence of pigs. But for snakes he was always hunting, stealing up to sunny hillocks in the effort to surprise them basking, or beating the coverts of "snake-brake" with his antlers to frighten them forth into the open, where he might trample them with his sharp and nimble hooves. In this antipathy he had his master's heartfelt co-operation, for, to MacTavish's somewhat child-like eyes, all snakes, the bright, harmless little garter-snakes no less than the deadly moccasin or copper-head, were children of the devil. This seemed to be exactly the point of view of Red Dandy as well. He would pursue a tiny, innocent, pale-green grass-snake, eight or ten inches long, with the same gay, dancing fury that he devoted to the destruction of a six-foot black-snake or blue-racer. But when it came to either an adder or a copper-head, then he was as cool and wary as a trained fencer. He knew—who shall say how, since MacTavish never taught him?—very well the difference between the snakes whose bite meant death and those which bore no poison-fangs in their jaws.

It happened that the southward slopes of the Ridge, being sheltered from all the harsher winds and full of sun-steeped ledges, were a favourite haunt of the copper-head, which nowhere else managed to maintain itself so far north. From time to time, when someone got bitten, there would be a move among the scattered settlers in both valleys toward a concerted campaign for the extermination of the virulent pests. But, for the most part, the copper-heads kept to the out-of-the-way ledges and inaccessible ravines, and so avoided making themselves conspicuous. They did not court notoriety, and therefore they were apt to be forgotten.

MacTavish, as a rule, never thought of them. But he thought of them abruptly on the morning when the rocky lip where he was standing to drink in the view suddenly scaled off beneath his weight, and he felt himself falling down the bare, terrific incline. The incline was almost perpendicular, and he fell swiftly, amid a whirl of dusty stones and a bright, hot glow, into the very face of the landscape. He scraped over a narrow ledge, clutched wildly at a bush which grew upon it, and was greeted with a savage hiss which seemed to him just in his ear. His hair rose, and he let go of the bush, and felt for the moment an actual relief in the fact that he kept right on falling. Then his head struck a projecting root, he bounced from a second ledge, lost consciousness, fell more expeditiously, and rolled to the bottom with a broken leg and a pattering company of stones of assorted sizes.

He knew nothing about it, of course, but those almost too attentive stones were his bodyguard, and for the moment an effective one. Hissing and rattling indignantly, a basking family of copper-heads scattered and scurried away, routed by the shower of stony missiles. In a few seconds the dust settled, and the last of the stones lay still. And so did MacTavish, for he had been well battered in that unceremonious descent, and the knock on his skull had been a shrewd one.

At the time of MacTavish's fall, Red Dandy had been close behind, nosing with fine velvet muzzle at his master's pocket to see if it held anything for him. He jumped back with a snort at MacTavish's amazing disappearance, and drew off resentfully. He was not accustomed to seeing his master behave with such abruptness, or go away without giving him time to follow. For several minutes he stalked back and forth, with head held very high and a puzzled look in his eyes. Then, beginning to get lonely, he went to the brink of the steep and cautiously peered over. His feet displaced some small stones, which went rattling down and struck MacTavish smartly. The buck expected to see him jump up and get angry at this. But instead of that he lay perfectly still.

Red Dandy grew troubled. He went close to the edge, pushed a few more stones down

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"He began to fade, through mere stillness, back into his surroundings."

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upon MacTavish, and seemed to dally for a moment with the notion of trying to slide down after them himself. No doubt he would have succeeded in sliding down, but a doubt as to how he would arrive gave him pause. He snorted uneasily, drew back from the brink, stood fretting for a moment or two, and then started along the crest of the Ridge in search of an easier way down.

When all had been quiet for some time at the foot of the steep, several of the copper-heads, shining with a dull glow in the sun, came gliding warily back towards their basking-place. The patriarch of the tribe, a thick-bodied, beautifully-patterned fellow, nearly six feet long, led the way. He came to within a few feet of the unconscious MacTavish, gave a warning rattle, and coiled himself to strike. His followers withdrew with petulant hissings, cheerfully leaving all the glory to him.

As MacTavish did not move, the snake did not strike. He waited, the picture of readiness, his flat, opaque eyes fixed on the mysterious object which had arrived so mysteriously among them. He waited for possibly ten minutes. Then, satisfied that the object was not alive, and not dangerous, he uncoiled and started to wriggle away.

At this moment MacTavish partially came to. He moved an arm. He tried to move his right leg. A groan came from his throat. The great snake recoiled himself in a flash, and rattled his loud warning like the gentlemanly fighter that he was.

At that ominous sound, MacTavish came to completely, with all his wits about him. He did not move a muscle, except to open his eyes slowly and peer about him. He did not have to peer about much, for there was the great copper-head straight in front of his face, with head gently swaying, within range and ready to strike.

MacTavish thought hard. He knew that his enemy would not strike so long as he kept perfectly still. But he knew also that the snake now knew he was alive, and therefore might wait rather indefinitely. How long would he be able to keep still? His broken leg was beginning to torture him savagely. Other snakes would presently come out of their hidings. How would he ever be able to drag himself away without bringing them upon him. The cold sweat jumped out all over his body. Then he felt his head swim again, and his wits again beginning to slip away. In an icy terror, he clutched them back to their duty, horrified lest he should move in his unconsciousness.

But, weak as he was, he began to contemplate futile schemes, such as clutching up a handful of stones and pelting the enemy away, though he knew very well that the enemy could strike at least three or four times as fast as he could move his arm.

The agony and suspense and confusion in his head were beginning to overcome him once more, when he caught a sound of light hooves behind him. He dared not turn his head to look, but he felt who it was, and his brain cleared again. He saw the coiled snake shift his head so as to give another focus to the curve of its swing.

A moment more, and Red Dandy came mincing into view, dancing that delicate war-dance with which he was wont to challenge the unresponsive pig. He swerved off to one side, drawing the copper-head's attention away from MacTavish. Then he warily presented the tips of his antlers, just within reach. The snake struck like lightning twice, spilling his venom harmlessly over the impenetrable horn. Teased by that exasperating antler, he struck again and again, till at last not a drop more venom came. Then, realising suddenly that his fighting powers were gone till he could secure them time to recuperate, he swiftly uncoiled and darted for shelter.

But, quick as he was, the buck was too quick for him. A keen-edged hoof, slicing downwards with vindictive force, struck him on the back of the neck just where it ran into the skull. That stroke severed the tough scales and shore the vertebral column clean through.

The deadly head dropped forward, utterly powerless, but the body, packed with vitality and force, writhed itself up in hideous, lashing coils. With one more stroke, Red Dandy smashed the impotent head. Then he stamped and trampled down the writhing coils, till they were chopped into bits, and his trim fetlocks streamed with blood. Not while there was anything left to writhe, would he give up his performance or accept his victory as complete.

MacTavish, feeling quite safe now as far as snakes were concerned, let himself go for a little. When he came to again, he felt better, and Red Dandy was standing beside him, sniffing at his face. He fondled the narrow, soft muzzle for a minute or two, expressing his unqualified admiration for his rescuer's courage and craft; and then, setting his teeth grimly, he started on the slow and agonising crawl down to the nearest farmstead.

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THE SPECIFICATION.

By OWEN OLIVER.

LORD ANTHONY RUTTON had lived hard, and he died hard. When the physician gave him three hours, he replied that he should take a dozen.

"I always take a bit more than is offered me," he said grimly. "That's how I made my money. Well, the money's mine to leave, if the title isn't. You can telegraph for the fool who succeeds me. I'm going to drive my last bargain with him."

Nature was a bit harder than Sir Anthony. He had his twelve hours, but he died an hour before his second cousin arrived from Scotland. In the meantime he had called in a solicitor in a small way, who lived near, and made his will.

"I can't cheat death," he remarked, when he signed the instrument, "but death shan't cheat me."

The lawyer waited at the house to receive the new Lord Rutton. He was a very pleasant little gentleman, and more capable than his small practice suggested. There had been two serious obstacles to his professional success — the lack of influential connections and the possession of an overscrupulous conscience. It seemed to him that his chance in life had come now. If he could become Lord Rutton's solicitor, his fortune would be made, and that of his family. He thought more of their gain than of his own.

"But I won't build too great hopes upon it," he warned himself. "If the new lord is like the old, it won't be easy to gain or retain his confidence."

He found the new lord a very different person—a tall, rather shy man of about five-and-thirty, who had devoted himself to chemical research, and had lived the life of a hermit, except for occasional golf and pretty regular chess. He had not noticed the falling out of those who stood between him and the title, and had no thought of it coming to himself till he received the telegram.

"I don't know what use a title will be to me, Mr. Adams," he told the solicitor. "I am an unambitious man, and a poor one."

"His lordship," the lawyer stated, "has left you all his property—it appears to be well over a million pounds—on conditions."

Lord Rutton gasped, and then laughed faintly.

"I don't know what I'll do with that, either," he confessed, "but I expect I'll find uses for it." He smiled a smile that made him look quite boyish. In many ways he was young for his age—a nice young fellow, the lawyer had decided. "But you said that there are conditions?"

"Somewhat unusual conditions." Mr. Adams coughed. "His lordship was very anxious that the family should continue—naturally, of course. He understood that you were a bachelor, and so—the condition is that you shall marry within a year from his death."

Lord Rutton pulled at his moustache and frowned.

"I suppose," he observed doubtfully, "a wife would be less annoyance than the loss of a million pounds."

The lawyer chuckled softly.

"If you choose the lady judiciously," he said, "there is no reason why she should be an annoyance at all."

"I think," Lord Rutton answered, "that the sort of lady who marries a man for his money is bound to be. But I suppose you could make arrangements with someone to take a certain sum and leave me alone?"

The lawyer looked at him for some time, moving his mouth curiously.

"My lord," he confessed, "your business is important to me. I want to retain your favour, but I must retain it honestly. I don't consider that I should be acting fairly to my late client in countenancing an arrangement of that kind. Indeed, it is expressly precluded by the will. Moreover, I do not regard the selection of a wife as a matter which one man can undertake for another. An ill-assorted marriage is the cause of much unhappiness, and the chief condition of a happy marriage is mutual regard between the parties."

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"I don't know a single woman whom I have the slightest desire to marry," his lordship stated, "and, as a matter of fact, I don't want to know one. It will have to be a business arrangement. I agree that I ought to make it myself, not put it on you. I suppose you won't object to introducing me to someone whom you think might do?"

"If you went into society——" the lawyer began.

"No, no!" his lordship interrupted. "I'd rather marry a washerwoman than a society lady! It must either be a business arrangement pure and simple, or some decent lady of the class in which I've been brought up—a lady who will look after my house and leave me to my work—somebody not too young, quiet and staid and good-tempered, interested in housekeeping and all that sort of thing; not a flighty young person who'll want to make me gad about. Do you know anyone like that?"

"Well," the lawyer said, "we have a pretty large circle of acquaintances; but I can't select a particular lady. My wife will be pleased for you to make use of our house and to meet our friends; but I strongly recommend a marriage in your own sphere."

"I mean to marry in my own sphere," his lordship insisted; "the sphere I've been brought up in . . . Look here, Mr. Adams. I can't let this money go, and a year isn't long. Help me, like a good fellow. I'm quite clear that you are. I'll choose the lady myself; but you'll assist me with your advice, won't you? You see, you'll know more about the ladies than I shall, in particular and in general."

"In particular, yes," the lawyer agreed. "I should make careful inquiries, of course. In general, I may perhaps have a little more experience of womenkind than you. It is rash to assume that one ever fathoms a woman, however. Yes, yes, I will see what can be done to introduce you to some ladies. Would you care to stay with us while you are in town? We could give you more facilities then."

"Yes," his lordship agreed. "Thank you. You must charge it up to the estate, you know. Business is business. Outside business you and I are going to be friends, I think."

"Yes, my lord, I think so."

They shook hands heartily.

"The best way," the lawyer pronounced, "will be to make up your mind first what you want—to draw up what I may call a specification of the lady. Of course, women aren't set patterns. The sex is variable, astonishingly variable. Still, the specification will give me a general idea of the ladies to ask to meet you—to ask my wife to ask."

"Capital," his lordship agreed, "capital!"

"We will not tell Mrs. Adams the object. She would co-operate readily enough—women are all matchmakers—but she would go by her own specification, not ours. In fact, she wouldn't have any specification, except 'excellent young woman who ought to be settled in life'; and, if she had, she wouldn't stick to it. Women never do. Now, *we* will have a detailed specification, and adhere to it in all essentials. Come round to my club, and we'll draw it up now."

They spent two hours over the specification, and finally produced the following, good character and conduct being taken as a matter of course—

1. *Age.*—Not under thirty.
2. *Disposition.*—Placid and unemotional.
3. *Pursuits.*—Domestic.
4. *Recreations.*—Embroidery, etc. (Social dissipations barred.)
5. *Education.*—Not advanced.
6. *Accomplishments.*—Not desired.
7. *Appearance.*—Neat and staid.
8. *Looks.*—Passable. Blonde preferred. (Positive good looks considered to incline to frivolity, but a degree of comeliness an advantage.)
9. *Condition.*—Preferably widow. (As inured to domesticity.)
10. *Connections.*—Middle-class; not to be related to Adams family. (Mr. Adams desired the last condition to secure himself from aspersions.)
11. *Mental gifts.*—Stupidity, except in household matters. (His lordship disliked clever women.)
12. *General.*—Unobtrusiveness and absence of loquacity.

Armed with the specification, they proceeded to the Adams household, which had already been warned by telephone. They were received by Mrs. Adams—a large, sensible, bonny lady, with a pleasant manner which put Lord Rutton at home—and a daughter of nineteen, a pretty, dark, daring girl, whom his lordship decided at once to be outrageously spoilt. She was the only child, and her parents evidently idolised her. She had a pouting look—due to features rather than to character, for she was good-humoured enough—an active mind and body, a remarkably active tongue, and a way of shrugging herself. She shrugged herself at his lordship.

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"I've never talked to a lord before," she informed him, "so I'm rather frightened of you."

"I've only been a lord a few hours," he retorted. "Let's forget all about it, and behave just as we usually do."

"*Except*, mummie?" she coaxed.

"Well"—her mother stroked her hair—"she remains an angel, of course, to her mother and father. See if you can behave angelically enough to justify us to Lord Rutton."

"He dropped several things and nearly knocked over the cake-stand."

"That may be all right for *you*," she told him, "but *my* ordinary behaviour is shocking!"

"It comes of naming her Angela," her mother apologised. "She's always been a living protest against her name."

The girl twined her arm through her mother's.

Angela laughed.

"Do you like angels?" she inquired saucily.

"This is my first experience," he replied. "So far—yes! Do you like lords?"

"This is my first experience," she retorted demurely. "So far—— It wouldn't be nice behaviour to say 'No'!"

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"I was to have your usual behaviour, I thought," he remarked.

"Then, so far"—she paused mischievously—"yes!" she decided at length.

"That's jolly!" said his lordship boyishly, and sat down beside her.

"Daddy has funny ideas of people," Angela confided to her mother, just before dinner. "Fancy his saying that the great lord was 'rather shy and reserved'! Why, he talks to me like anything! I rather like him. He doesn't 'side' a bit, does he?"

"Oh, Angela, your slang!"

"I've been badly brought up, darling—— There's the gong. We won't keep the shy and reserved lord waiting for his dinner. 'Shy and reserved'! I believe he's a regular Don Juan!"

His lordship, however, showed very little of the Don Juan during dinner or afterwards, until the two ladies who had been invited—at Mr. Adams's suggestion—had left. He had a few passages of raillery with the mischievous Angela, but he scarcely got beyond "Yes" and "No" with the others.

"Well?" the lawyer asked, when they were having a quiet smoke later. "They both meet the specification fairly well, I think."

"Yes," his lordship agreed, "but I don't know if we thought of everything in the specification. I'm afraid they—they'd *manage* me. I don't want a wife to do that. I'm rather—rather afraid of them, especially the schoolmistress one. She'd always be putting me through my tables, so to speak."

"Ah!" said the lawyer. "Umph, yes! Somebody more docile, eh?"

"Yes," his lordship assented, "that's it."

There were a number of ladies at afternoon tea the next day. The number seemed to confuse Lord Rutton. He dropped several things and nearly knocked over the cake-stand. Angela gave him a little table to put his cup on, and whispered in his ear. He looked up at her and laughed—his only laugh while the guests were present.

"I'm not used to the society of ladies," he remarked to Mrs. Adams, when the last visitor had left, "and I've no small-talk for them. My mind is full of chemical experiments."

"What a horrid mind!" Angela observed, tilting wildly in the rocking-chair.

"Well," he said, "er—yes. You have to thank Angela that I didn't do more harm by my clumsiness, Mrs. Adams."

"I saw her whisper to you," Mrs. Adams said. "It seemed to amuse you."

He laughed, seized the side of the rocking-chair suddenly, and made Angela scream.

"She told me that bulls who got in china-shops should sit still!" he said.

"Angela!" her mother cried.

Angela was too busy resisting his lordship's attempts to disturb the balance of her chair to answer. Finally she escaped to the other side of the room, and gave a lively representation of Lord Rutton discussing the responsibilities of the peerage with Mrs. Cox, a plaintive little widow lady. She was Mrs. Cox. A sofa cushion on a chair was his lordship. It wasn't a talking part, she explained, and she could kick the chair and make it tremble when the noble peer got nervous. "Arthur, my boy, bevare of vidders!" she admonished him. "They *might* make you speak!"

His lordship, who had lost his embarrassment, retorted with a representation of a conversation between himself and Angela. *He* was Angela, he said, and there was no need to represent himself. He never had a chance to get a word in.

"What is the subject of the conversation to be?" Mr. Adams asked,

"My dear sir," his lordship protested, "Angela never has a subject. She just twitters!" He proceeded to twitter from subject to subject *à la* Angela, till that young lady threatened to stifle him with the sofa cushion.

"If you say another word," she stated, "we'll be bad friends. You said you liked music. I'm going to play; come and turn over. Don't do it like a bull in a—a music-shop!"

"It's very curious," Mr. Adams whispered to his wife. "He is afraid of the quietest, staidest women, and yet he isn't a bit afraid of our rackety, mischievous little angel! But, of course, she's only a child!"

"Yes," Mrs. Adams agreed—"yes. They seem to get on very well."

They continued to get on very well, and his lordship seemed in no hurry to leave the house, though he made little progress in the object of his visit. One lady after another was dismissed, as "not in accordance with specification," or on the more general ground that his lordship did not consider her "the sort he wanted."

"Perhaps," Mr. Adams suggested, "our set is too much of a pattern. You might get Angela to take you to the tennis club. You'd meet a varied assortment there."

"Oh," his lordship said, "she often

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takes me! They don't satisfy the specification at all."

"Well," the lawyer said, "something must be done; you can't lose all that money. Do you know the Meadows? They've a houseboat up the river, and there are always crowds of people there. Angela goes sometimes, and——"

"Oh, yes, she took me last week! I didn't care much for them, and we generally hire a skiff and go on our own now."

"Then," the lawyer said, "I really don't know what more I can do." He spoke a trifle testily. If his client dallied about, and failed to get married within the year, and lost the estates, there would be no estates for his solicitor to manage; and, apart from the legal profits, Mr. Adams's fingers itched to handle the business. He loved his work. "Perhaps," he suggested, "it would be better if I took my wife into our confidence, after all. She is discreet—for a woman—and she might think of someone whom I have overlooked, or find ways of introducing you to fresh candidates, if I may so describe them. You see, the process of—er—courting takes some time; a nice lady would probably wish for an engagement of a few months. It would look better. Would you mind if I consulted Mrs. Adams?"

His lordship did not mind. He had grown very cheerful lately, and did not seem to mind anything.

"You might tell her this afternoon," he suggested. "I'll keep Angela out of the way. She always likes to go up the river."

"Yes," the lawyer said—"yes. It is kind of you to take the child out so much."

His lordship and Angela departed immediately after luncheon. She was ready first for once, and her bright young voice was audible in the dining-room, where her parents sat, when she called upstairs—

"Hurry up, Arthur! Oh, you *snail!*"

Then they heard his voice, and that also was very cheerful.

"I like that!" he cried, evidently running down the stairs. "It's the only time you've been ready first—out of fifty! You little black angel!"

Then the front door slammed.

"Fifty!" Mr. Adams remarked. "I am afraid that Angela is making him neglect his business."

"His business?" Mrs. Adams inquired. "I didn't know he had any."

Mr. Adams rose and stood in front of the fire-screen, with his hands under his coat-tails.

"He has a very important business on hand, my dear," he said. "Indirectly, it is of importance to me—to us. He inherits his cousin's fortune only on the condition that he marries within a year from his cousin's death. What do you think of that?"

Mrs. Adams laid down the newspaper which she had been reading, and stared at the wall.

"A year," she said, "is rather soon." She sighed.

"And he has wasted two and a half weeks of it," her husband said sadly. "You see, he didn't know anybody suitable; and he wouldn't listen to my advice, and go into society, and find someone in his own sphere. He preferred a quiet, domesticated woman in the class that he had been brought up in, and I thought——"

Mrs. Adams laughed suddenly.

"And *that's* why you've made me have all those women here?"

"Well, yes, my dear."

"I wondered why you suggested so many frumps!" she said scornfully. "Oh, you men!" She laughed heartily.

"They were in accordance with his own specification," her husband said. "A man has a right to choose the sort of wife he wants; and I drew it up under his precise instructions."

"Drew up what?" Mrs. Adams inquired.

"The specification, my dear. The—er—the particulars of the lady—the—er—the sort of lady he wanted."

"Oh-h-h!" Mrs. Adams seemed to gasp. "You mean to say—— Why, you silly man, how was he to know the sort of woman he wanted till he met her? Did *you?*"

"I knew the moment I did meet her, Jennie. If you remember——"

"Yes, yes, I know, Jack. Perhaps *he* did—would, I mean."

"Exactly." The lawyer rubbed his hands. "The point is, to give him the opportunity of meeting this recognisably right lady. Perhaps, if I showed you the specification, you could find her."

"I think it highly probable," Mrs. Adams said gravely. But when her husband had gone to fetch the particulars, she laughed till she had to wipe her eyes.

"Specification!" she cried. "Oh, those men!"

Mr. Adams returned, took up his position by the mantelshelf, and read out the list from the first item to the last. Then he looked at his wife anxiously.

"Do you know any ladies who answer to the specification?" he asked.

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"I know one," she said promptly, "and one only."

"Who is that?" he demanded eagerly.

"Why, of course," Mrs. Adams said, "Angela!"

Mr. Adams seemed to shoot up into the air, he started so visibly.

"Angela!" he ejaculated. "Our Angela! My dear Jennie, the child is scarcely out of the nursery!"

"She's nineteen and a half."

"Ye-es, but she is the exact opposite of every item in the specification!"

"The specification had better be amended, then. I rather fancy that he will propose to her this afternoon."

"But she is such a child. She—you don't think she'll accept him?"

"I'm quite sure she will. Oh, Jack, you dear blind old bat, can't you see that they haven't eyes for anybody but each other?"

"I can see it now," he said, four hours later, when he saw them coming in the front gate. Angela was holding his lordship's arm, and smiling up at him. "I can see it now," he repeated. "Well, well, he's a good chap. Heaven bless them! We'll have to amend the specification."

But Angela did that for him in the course of the evening, after her engagement had been sanctioned. Her lover had told her of the specification, and she demanded it for inspection. She disdained to enter into particulars. It was too much like a confession book, she said, and she was more than twelve items. "About half a million," she thought, "and most of them outrageous!"

"You've got to take the lot, Arthur," she observed, "all—what's that you say in those printed things, daddy? I know—all faults and misdescriptions accepted. Where's a thick pen? Now the red ink, old man!"

She dipped the pen in the ink and wrote one word across the particulars in her dashing hand—a whirligig hand, her father called it. The word was "Angela."

"That," she pronounced, "is the specification!"

A WOODLAND LEGEND.

THE low clouds drive across the sky,
Touching the tree-tops as they pass,
Where beech woods on the hillside lie,
And upland fields of wiry grass.
In every hollow 'mid the trees
Grey cloud hangs heavily, like smoke
On summer days without a breeze—
"The colliers!" cry the woodland folk.

For, many hundred years ago,
The charcoal-burners' greenwood smoke
Hung o'er the hollowed clearings, low,
Pearl-grey 'gainst leafless beech and oak.
And so the tale runs, every year
When mists enfold the beechen spires,
Bright points of flame below shine clear
Where ghostly "colliers" tend their fires.

V. FANE.

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THE ROMANCE OF NEW ZEALAND.

BY LADY BROOME.

The late Lady Broome occupied a place of her own as a historian of impressions and reminiscences of the rapidly-changing conditions of life in more than one of our overseas Dominions. As Lady Barker, wife of General Sir George Barker, she had an interesting insight into Anglo-Indian life of the period immediately following the Mutiny, but it was not until after her second marriage that she published her first book, the interesting "Station Life in New Zealand," and the subsequent "Letters to Guy." As the wife of the late Sir Frederick Napier Broome, who became successively Governor of Western Australia and of Trinidad, she had further opportunities for interesting observations, many of which are recorded in her "Colonial Memories." The following article is from a manuscript which remained unpublished at the time of its author's death.

IT is difficult—almost impossible—to realise that the grandfathers of this generation can easily remember the day when New Zealand was proclaimed a British possession, for that event took place only in 1840, and the three islands—two big and one little—were made a separate colony the next year. Up to that date they had formed part of New South Wales, but since they started on their own account, as it were, several other small islands, such as the Cook and Kermadec groups, have been included in the newer colony.

The progress made from the very first has been wonderful, for in 1865 a pretty little town was standing on the banks of the Avon—a town with pavements, street lamps, and even letter-boxes. There were also excellent shops, imposing-looking banks and public offices, as well as a pretty little Parliament House, to say nothing of the foundations of the present stately cathedral. It is true that the few bridges across the river were only frail wooden structures, and that the river itself was choked by a luxuriant growth of watercress—so choked that for long reaches it looked in the early spring more like a green lane than a river, and that the "Watercress Ordinance" was one of the burning political questions of that decade.

As the oak to the acorn, so is the splendid new "Dominion" to the young, struggling colony of that day just over forty years ago. Where long stretches of yellow tussock-covered plains extended for what seemed endless miles when they had to be traversed on horseback, there are now farms and fields and expanses of wheat which, as the Psalmist says, "make the valleys to laugh and sing" in the glorious autumn weather—an autumn which it is always puzzling to remember begins at Easter!

This youngest and fairest of our giant children has one grand reason for congratulation—she has done it all herself! Most of our other colonial possessions owe their growth and their prosperity to some fortunate and often unexpected circumstance, such as the discovery of gold-mines or other sources of mineral wealth, which have attracted alien crowds to their shores. It is true that at one time, some five-and-forty years ago, the discovery of promising gold-fields on the banks of the Hokitika River, on the west coast of the Middle Island, attracted a great crowd of miners, chiefly from Australia; but the difficulties of approach by sea and of transport by land were so great that little practical good accrued to the infant colony. Since those initial days, however, gold-mining in the North Island and on the west coast has settled down into a recognised and profitable industry, and of late over £120,000 worth of silver has also been extracted in a single year, as well as over eleven millions' worth of coal, and more than twelve millions' worth of Kauri gum.

But, in spite of these figures, the fact remains that New Zealand is first a pastoral and secondly an agricultural country. Not even the huge prairies of Manitoba can vie with the Canterbury plains in the luxuriance of their wheat-fields, and certainly the climatic advantages lie with those fairy islands beneath the Southern Cross. No extremes of heat and cold are theirs, nor do they know the anxieties and ruin from alternate drought and floods which beset the stock-owner of Australia. The farmer can have a reasonable expectation of favourable weather for his sowing and reaping, nor need he fear the interruption of his haymaking by

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a heavy snowfall, as sometimes happens in Alberta, whose fine meadow lands extend up to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

In the North Island, not only do grasses and root-crops grow with equal luxuriance, but in many places the soil is almost too rich for wheat or oats or even barley. So temperate is the climate that oranges, lemons, olives, and vines flourish side by side with our English fruits. In my day, however, a lemon was as rare and unattainable a luxury as a pineapple would have been in London at the same date.

There is room and to spare for the farmer, the stock-raiser, the fruit grower, the miner —in fact, for all sorts and conditions of men except the loafer, the corner-boy, or the remittance man. In them—too sadly often —neither change of sky nor even the exhilaration of the splendid climate can change the qualities which place and keep them at the bottom of the ladder of life; and it is not to them that New Zealand has owed anything in the past, nor to them that she looks in the future for her prosperous citizens. To the honest, industrious emigrant she holds out both hands—hands filled with plenty. Her land laws are specially framed for the help and encouragement of the *bona fide* settler, and the Government lends money to small farmers, on the security of their holdings, at low interest. It also leases allotments to persons desirous of engaging in farm work, at an almost nominal rental. There are experimental farms, too, which not only disseminate useful scientific information, but provide instructors, and, in certain cases, stock or poultry for breeding purposes. Machinery is largely used, and this, taken in connection with the temperate and comparatively reliable climate, reduces the farmer's risks to a minimum. Of course, wages are high, but for skilled labour there is always a good market.

To my mind, the most wonderful change of all is in the facilities for education. In my day many of our best and steadiest shepherds and small farmers could not even read themselves, and were comparatively indifferent to their children's education. I remember on one occasion, in my rides among the hills, dropping down on what was called a "nest of cockatoos"; they were not large white birds with yellow crests, but a little cluster of wooden shanties sheltering some twenty or thirty families. They did not in any sense own the land, but just squatted there, scratched the surface of the soil in the most primitive fashion, raised crops of potatoes and other vegetables, reared poultry and pigs, and contrived to exist much as the birds after whom they were nicknamed, for cockatoos descend on a wheat-field and remain there as long as they are allowed. It was, of course, all very irregular, to say the least of it, but I easily made friends with the women and children, who, by the way, looked the picture of blooming health. We soon got on confidential terms, but when I asked about schooling, etc., I was told: "Law, mum, they ain't even christened yet!" How impossible it would be to find such a state of things now in a colony whose Government spends £500,000 annually in educating its children, besides the revenue from the numerous educational endowments. Useful technical education is also provided, and is much taken advantage of. Indeed, so well catered for has been the mental development of the young New Zealander that the colony already leads the way in many of our most thorny roads to progress, and boasts that woman's suffrage has worked peaceably and comfortably there for the last four years. To some extent Socialistic doctrines may also be said to prevail in New Zealand, but, in considering this question, it must be remembered that the conditions are widely different from those in the Old Country. The very fact of the space and absence of overcrowding on the soil, the youth and vigour of the colony, the comparatively simple mode of life which exists, are all powerful aids to the common-sense which is necessary to the practical working of any new order of things.

But none of these modern developments seem to affect the real character of the colonists, who remain as sturdy loyal British subjects—in an elastic sense of the word, however—as were their English and Scotch forefathers. When the Imperial Representative Corps of 1,000 splendid picked soldiers returned from their long tour in 1901–2, both officers and men declared that New Zealand was far and away the most English of all the countries they had seen; and we all know what splendid contingents, and how many of them, New Zealand furnished during the Boer War.

Another marvellous change since the dear and distant days I speak of is in the introduction of game. There was literally none in my time beyond wild duck, which were abundant, but very difficult to get at. Wild pig stalking was a favourite and necessary diversion of the young sheep farmer if he

wished to save his lambs alive in the early spring, and the boars, who were as wily though not as beautiful as stags, gave excellent sport among the foothills of the great Southern Alps. But in the rugged "bush" round the shores of Lake Rotoiti, in the Middle or South Island, genuine red-deer can be shot, as well as in the hilly forest region known as "The Dingle," Lake Hawea, and, judging from the illustration in the New Zealand Official Guide Book, very fine heads can be obtained.

These were non-existent, so far as I know, up to 1869, and the only deer I heard spoken of were the descendants of some fallow-deer sent out from Windsor by the Prince Consort. They were even then multiplying in a manner alarming to the station-holders, whose low wire fences—fences costing £100 a mile to put up when even only seventy-five miles from a town—were, of course, no protection against deer. It is, therefore, not surprising to hear that permission is readily granted to sportsmen from the run-holders between the Wairadapa Valley and the east coast.

It used also to be said that the reason there were no fish in the numerous and beautiful rivers with which New Zealand is so well watered was that the said rivers had a tendency, which I myself saw carried out upon one occasion, to change their beds in a single night, cutting a fresh channel through good pasture-land, and leaving in exchange a useless expanse of shingle. Yet one now hears on all hands that New Zealand rivers have been successfully stocked with both Californian rainbow and English brown trout. From November to April the fishing must be simply magnificent, the trout being plentiful and showing great fight, and the only contingency to be dreaded is the discoloration and disturbance of the water by a hot wind melting the alpine snows.

One has very little idea of the vast number of tourists who visit these beautiful islands every year, and when one thinks of the variety and wonders of the scenery they contain, it is easy to understand the attraction. Not only can the sportsman enjoy himself by going out "to kill something" on the fine days, which are the rule and not the exception in New Zealand, but the mountaineer can find peaks to climb worthy of his alpenstock. There are burning lakes in the north which send up lofty geysers "while you wait"; there are ice-clad lakes in the south where you may easily catch fish weighing twenty pounds. There are rapids to be shot, sulphur falls, alum cliffs, and pools which are roused to frenzy by throwing a clod of earth into them. And all around and at every turn is beauty—beauty of form, of colouring, of sky and snowy range, of calm meres and rushing rivers, of plain and forest.

The Government of New Zealand appears to be truly patriarchal. It not only provides for the man who goes out with or without even small capital, and helps him to settle on the land, giving him a good start, but it concerns itself with the mere pleasure-seeker. There is a "Department of Tourist and Health Resorts," where you can find out all you desire to know about the place you want to reach, and if you are so ill-advised as to die whilst touring, the Public Trust Office will look after your affairs and the Public Trustee discharge the duties of executor in the most satisfactory manner.

In conclusion, it only remains to point out to "the man in the street"—the crowded street—that across the sea is a beautiful land—his own—owing its strength and prosperity to men like himself, where he can not only dwell under his own vine and fig-tree, but under his own flag, where children are a blessing, not a curse, and where his wife can make an ideal home if she be of the type from which our earliest and best colonists were taken. My own experience of a much later date, however, taught me that this type of woman—and women count for quite as much as men in colonisation—has been nearly improved and educated off the face of the earth. It is of no use for ever so earnest a settler to take out a wife who is unwilling or unable to rough it at first with him, but given such a helpmate, then indeed nowhere can more favourable or familiar conditions be found than in New Zealand.

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THE SHOVE.

By HERBERT WOTTON WESTBROOK.

LTHOUGH this story has to do with one of her failures, there is no doubt that Lady Caroline Bloom is one of the most uniformly successful social shovers at present practising. Aided by Caroline, the newest and most grandfatherless of millionaires can face the attack on the citadel of Society without a tremor. If she undertakes the case, she will see him through. He signs a cheque, she does the rest. It is true that, in the case of the Wheelings, she failed, but it was a glorious failure, and her only one.

If you are one of those modern stalwarts who ignore the existence of social shovers, you must be informed that Caroline is the second daughter of the late Earl of Ross. Ten years ago she married Cecil Bloom, who made a fortune, lost it, and died, leaving Caroline, penniless, on her own resources.

Turning, naturally, to the Allaintyres, she found them, one and all, burning to show their sympathy in every form except, of course, the financial.

Caroline had three good points—she was charming, she was immaculate, she was discreet. When she informed the family, through Mrs. George Kerrison, her cousin, the wife of an extremely popular brigadier, that she proposed to become a shover, the family, without exactly expressing approval of the scheme, gave her to understand that she could count on their support. It was felt that, after all, Caroline had chosen the best possible course in the circumstances.

I do not intend to chronicle the details in Caroline's shoving. After she emerged from her eighteen months' oblivion on the Continent, badly in want of clothes, she shoved three times in not quick succession, and in each case profitably to herself and to the shoved.

But after her third case—they were some people called Limstock, whose daughter had to be invited to Burnt Willows, that Allaintyre stronghold, for the second week in October—the family had freed themselves from whatever alarm they may primarily have entertained in regard to the way Caroline proposed to conduct herself in her profession. She was no vulgar and obvious shover. In all three cases the shoved were people of pre-eminent worth, who had reached a point in the social climb when to stand still was impossible and to turn back unthinkable.

Caroline's fourth case was, as I have said, a failure.

The *Sea-Foam*, the Wheelings' yacht, lay anchored in the Bay of Monaco. So far all had gone well.

Caroline, who was making this visit as a sort of final inspection of the Wheelings before the season opened—two months hence—was quite satisfied that they would do. They were excellent people in every way. Eric Wheeling was sincerely philanthropic, and the astringent varnish in which he had made his money had settled down as a permanent commercial fact, and, despite the posters, had almost ceased to be an obstacle to social success, which, as a matter of fact, he himself did not desire. He was quite contemptuous of Henrietta Wheeling's ambitions, and Henrietta had successfully concealed from him that Caroline was shoving. He looked on her merely as a delightful guest. A chance remark of his wife, elated by Caroline's frank prophecies of an easy victory, and the sudden appearance of the George Kerrisons' *Nausicaa*, riding at a neighbouring buoy, provided the first hint of trouble.

Caroline was the first to find it. She observed that Mr. Wheeling was too polite to her, and, what was worse, much too polite to his wife.

Caroline and Henrietta faced each other a shade uneasily.

"Eric," said Henrietta, "has such a placid temper."

It was a matter of principle with Caroline to be absolutely candid at certain crises.

"If I undertake to shove a married couple," she said, "it is always against the will of the man. Otherwise, I should decline the engagement. The sort of man who

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wants to be shoved is the sort of man I don't cater for. But if, on the other hand, his wife isn't clever enough to prevent him becoming sulky about it—well, I don't cater for her, either."

"We never quarrel," said Henrietta hastily, but her voice was uneasy.

Caroline, going ashore that morning to make some purchases, met Mrs. George Kerrison in the Rue du Soleil, and returned with her to the *Nausicaa* to see George.

Incidentally, Caroline remarked, "You'll be in London in May?" in such a tone that George and his wife began to laugh.

It was this attitude which made Caroline conscious, for the first time, that she had a feeling of disinterested affection for the Wheelings.

She was rowed to the *Sea-Foam*, leaving George Kerrison and his wife extolling her histrionics.

"She has deceived herself," said Mrs. George.

"Quite an artist," observed George, adding: "It was rather superfluous for her to unload her patter on *us*."

At luncheon, Caroline saw that, from a professional standpoint, she was in serious difficulties. Eric's continued ill-temper had shaken Henrietta, who, alone with Caroline in her boudoir, made the astounding statement that George had "committed the *bêtise* of gambling in the public rooms at the Casino."

This observation stupefied her. If Henrietta Wheeling, she mused, really took the line that it was vulgar to play roulette in public, she might easily have a secret store of other convictions which would range from excessive gentility to offensive imbecility.

Rather furtively Caroline had tea that afternoon at Ciro's with the Kerrisons, and the meal brought to her both consolation and dismay.

Both these mental acquisitions proceeded from Mrs. George Kerrison's account of her maid Jeanne's evening at the tables.

"The treasure," said Mrs. George, "told me that she had a longing to play, and so I sent her out last night to the Casino; she went with the wife of the harbour-master's assistant. I think that it makes one's maid more sympathetic about one's own speculations if she has lost a few francs for herself."

Jeanne had, indeed, lost a few francs, but she had gained, besides the experience which her mistress reckoned so valuable, a gratuitous excitement of another kind. A man, so Jeanne had related, had lost his temper over some misunderstanding with a croupier, and had left the building at the request of the authorities. Jeanne had described the man minutely to Mrs. George, and there existed in Caroline's mind, as she munched those enormous *éclairs* which are Ciro's pride, no doubt but that the man was Eric Wheeling.

This explained the attitude which Caroline, as a shover, had deprecated in Henrietta. The first thing upon which an experienced shover insists is perfect accord between husband and wife. Matters being as they were, to shove the Wheelings was impossible. Caroline returned to the *Sea-Foam* with her occupation gone.

She had made a mistake. She had selected for shoving a couple the shoving of whom must mean failure, and she could not afford to risk failure.

The Wheelings might be shoved, but by some other shover.

If Caroline had exercised that brutal candour which, as I have already shown, she possessed, and had straightway packed up and gone home, leaving the Wheelings to have their shoving done by some hardier hand, she would have obeyed her first impulse.

She did not know what induced her to temporise. Everything pointed to an immediate evacuation. It would, she had no need to tell herself, be kinder to the Wheelings to be frank.

But she was not frank—she did temporise. The fact was that she was fond of the Wheelings.

Each of the three previous shoved had made the mistake of trying to entice her into a personal friendship, mistaking her professional intimacy for human affection. The Wheelings, who might have had such advances encouraged, did not attempt them, and Caroline liked them for it. As a shover, she was of granite and steel. Up till now it had chanced that the shoved had liked her personally, and that the shover, on her part, had been so consummately indifferent to the shoved that she had not even let them see that, as people, they bored her.

But the Wheelings did not bore her. She liked them, and she was sorry for them. She liked Mrs. Wheeling's loyalty to her husband, even though it militated against her social ambitions. And as for Eric Wheeling, Caroline had become proud that she knew him. And it was for this reason

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that she appeared on deck next morning fully determined to do, for her own pleasure, what, for the professional scope of a shover, the Wheelings had rendered impossible. Blinded by floods of sentiment and good nature, Caroline thought herself brilliant enough to fly in the face of technique, and, in the character of a reckless amateur, to tread the path which the boards of experience barred with a frowning "No Thoroughfare."

It was a beautiful morning, and Caroline, when she joined Eric at the bulwarks, was not surprised to see George Kerrison dive gracefully off from the stern of the *Nausicaa*. The "cluppe" with which George entered the water was a welcome subject for Caroline and Eric.

They talked about bathing.

"Some people funk the sea even when they can swim," said Eric. "It's a question of nerves. I, for instance, look on water as a friendly thing, although I can't swim a stroke. But heights——" He swung a leg across the bulwarks, seized a mainmast sheet, and gingerly put his other leg across, so that he sat on the rail with his legs dangling over space. "There," he said, "I'm quite jumpy. I make myself do it, but I hate it, really."

Caroline agreed with him. "I know what you mean," she said. "Everybody has some sort of weakness. George has one—I forget what. But he has extraordinary nerve in his swimming, because he is apt, at any moment, to get an attack of muscular cramp in his arms."

"But doesn't he sink like a stone?" asked Eric, gazing out at George Kerrison, who was approaching the bows of the yacht with a steady breast-stroke.

"No," replied Caroline. "He turns on his back, and, if it is calm, there is plenty of time for someone to come and grab him. It has been done on three separate occasions—once in the pool at Burnt Willows, when a garden-boy fished him out; then at Killarney, where a travelling barrister brought him to land; and, the last time it happened, he was rescued at Cookham by a chorus-girl who aspired to play Juliet."

"How did you know that?" inquired Eric.

"She told George when he pumped her. He always pumps his rescuers, in order that he can give them just what they most require."

"And so the garden-boy——"

"Was put into a racing stable, and is riding regularly in France. The barrister was given a constituency, and the chorus-girl——"

"Great Scot," cried Eric, "I remember!" So do you, reader. You may not have seen her Juliet, done one pleasant Friday, in London, at a special *matinée*, but you will have recalled, I fancy, what the independent critics wrote about the show.

"It seems to be advantageous, in a sense, to rescue General Kerrison," remarked Eric.

"Well," said Caroline, smiling up at him, "you get what you want." "Or what your wife wants," was the thought which, now entering her head, prepared her for the shove.

"In that case," said Eric, "the ambitions of someone are likely to be furthered before luncheon."

He had hardly said "luncheon" before a clear cry of "Help!" floated along the water.

You have been warned that there was to be a coincidence, and this is it.

The cry of "Help!" came from George.

In a second the deck of the *Nausicaa* was alive with people anxious to rescue George, and a rush of feet on the *Sea-Foam* indicated that most of the crew had dashed to the bow for the same reason. They could sight the cramped George below from the bow.

But Caroline and Eric, from their position, could also see him clearly.

"He has turned——" began Eric interestedly.

But Caroline's cigarette, applied to his hand which grasped the sheet, caused him to relax his hold, and the sudden, firm pressure exerted by her other hand on the small of his back had its answer, after a gurgling, scrabbling two seconds' pause, in the splash with which Eric sank into the wonderfully blue Mediterranean.

"Help!" shouted Caroline, intercepting a belated artificer who was running to the bow, "Mr. Wheeling is attempting a brave rescue, and I don't think he can swim."

A form shot between her and the laggard denizen of the engine-room, and the splash of the husband was re-echoed by that of his wife.

In the busy scene which followed, Caroline was not absolutely idle. Although she would have preferred to enjoy her *coup* in complete solitude and passivity, she was one of the first to inaugurate, by throwing one, the rain of life-belts which threatened to reduce Eric and Henrietta to pulp; and as the devoted couple retired below to change their clothes, she said everything that was adequate

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in praise of the heroism of both individuals. She was not surprised that neither answered her.

Across the extremely azure water a boat drew nearer and nearer the *Sea-Foam*. She

"The sudden, firm pressure exerted by her other hand."

was the *Nausicaa's* dinghy, and seated in her were George Kerrison, some of his yacht's crew, and Eylett, the Wheelings' steward.

"Her father has a fruit farm in Jamaica, General," she heard Eylett say blissfully, "and we plighted our troth five years ago——"

"Caroline," said George, "it was splendid——"

"I only did my duty, General," urged Eylett.

"Yes, yes, my good man—I meant you. I'll talk to you later." The steward retired, though not so far that Caroline could not hear faint allusions to "troth," "Jamaica," and "five years ago," wafted sibilantly from Eylett's direction.

"Splendid," repeated George.

"Eric Wheeling, you mean," said Caroline.

"Yes, yes—oh, *he*"—George jerked his thumb towards the mouthing Eylett—"was splendid, too—a voluble idiot, but splendid. Wheeling, whom I was watching whilst I was treading water, couldn't swim. Think of it, Caroline—he couldn't swim! He had just the one idea to save a fellow-creature's life, and he shot off that rail without another thought—and he couldn't swim!"

"It was superb!"

"Hot-tempered fellow, isn't he? Had a row with a croupier? Yes, that's always the way. That's the very type of man who does lay down his life for his friend. Friend, did I say? He has never even spoken to me. My hat, Wheeling's the type that makes us all glad we are Englishmen! But he *is* my friend—he must be. I want to see him—I want to be his pal. And his wife—Gertrude will want to know him and his wife. She'll come and see her, Gertrude will. You must arrange it, Caroline—you are good at that sort of thing. I must see them now. Where are they? By Jove, she's a plucky woman, too! What bricks! Where are they?"

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Caroline went below.

With great difficulty she managed to extract Henrietta from Eric's cabin, and, when Caroline had finished what she had to say, Henrietta said: "You are morally a murderess, and you are going ashore at once. You can trust me to pack your things, which will follow you, and I can trust you to take General Kerrison away with you. You had better tell him your story in advance, because I am writing to him. I would see him personally, but the face of a Kerrison would, as it always will, remind me of how I almost lost Eric. I shall tell General Kerrison the whole truth. *I saw you* from the top of the companion. Eric"—here she raised her voice—"will you please come and do me up, you dear old darling?" And Caroline, in the act of shutting the cabin door behind her, heard Eric's affectionate acquiescence.

Standing by the rail were George and Eylett. "Her father, he is a man of means," the steward was saying. "He is well-disposed, but he is strict. 'If you can support my daughter in the style what she is accustomed to, you can have her,' was his words. Now, with what I've saved, and——" George was nodding his head with the obvious air of one who is disposed to be benevolent.

Caroline approached the pair.

CRADLE SONG.

LITTLE hands, little hands,
Tiny things whose dear commands
Beat against my breast;
There'll come an hour,
When you have pow'r
To break what loves you best.
Then sleep, my heart, sleep,
If you would not weep—
Life is short, and God's love is deep!

Little feet, little feet,
Scarce you bear the body sweet
On my bosom curled;
There'll come a day
When you must stray
Into an unknown world.
Then sleep, my heart, sleep,
If you would not weep—
Life is short, and God's love is deep!

Little heart, little heart,
Every lovely fall and start
Keeps in tune with mine;
There will come years
When blinding tears
May drown the joy in thine.
Then sleep, my soul, sleep,
If you would not weep—
Life is short, and God's love is deep!

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

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NEMESIS OR BAD LUCK?

By CHARLES INGE.

"AND me learning all about parts, and how to drive! 'Lectricity, too! What's been the good? She only goes when she's towed, and she done nigh everything but rear." With weary bitterness, Joye, ex-coachman-chauffeur, addressed the group assembled round the kitchen table for tea.

The cook voiced the grievances of the household. "And half the week a sort of picnic, with us waiting up for you, and them wanting meals at all hours of the night! Broken down! I'm getting sick of the breakdowns!"

"Isn't she just mad, too, when she do get home!" The parlourmaid raised her eyebrows, wagging her head. "He does try to make the best of it."

"I expect she's sorry she bought that motor bonnet now," piped the kitchen-maid.

"'Taint a motor at all," blurted out Joye —"it's a bally wild beast!"

The recently-purchased motor-car was under discussion.

A certain Captain Bather had sold her to Mr. Dewdney because of urgent private affairs, describing her as a twenty-four h.p. four-cylinder live-axle Mercury, and a bargain at three hundred and sixty pounds, without lamps; moreover, he managed to convey an impression that she was good on hills.

Two weeks after Mr. Dewdney had paid three hundred and twenty for her, Mrs. Dewdney openly reproached him with negligence in that he had not obtained some sort of guarantee that she would go on the flat. Since then there had been nothing but disillusionment at "Fallowfield," and away from it—hours of weariness at country stations, or nights of discomfort in strange beds with cheap, hastily-bought outfits.

The end came three miles outside Aylesbury, four months after purchase.

As Mr. and Mrs. Dewdney trudged those three miles in the dust, the bitterness of failure settled down on them during the long silences. While they paced the platform of the station, they reviewed the career of misdemeanours—Nutley, Chiddingstone, Midhurst, Penn, and many nowheres, and now Aylesbury. The discussion continued when Mrs. Dewdney had arranged herself, reclining on the carriage-seat, as the train started.

"It's too bad!" complained Mr. Dewdney, staring moodily at the advertisement over his wife's head. "It is men like Captain Bather who bring discredit on motoring."

"Urgent private affairs!" snorted Mrs. Dewdney. "Swindling, I call it! I mistrusted him from the first, with his smooth hair and his eyeglass. He took you in properly!" She turned to glare at her husband.

"I thought he was a gentleman, and treated him as such." Mr. Dewdney's tone conveyed a dignified reproach.

"Took his word, and wouldn't have an expert, as I wanted." Mrs. Dewdney leaned up to jerk her skirts more over her feet.

"I shall certainly write to him," announced her husband. "It's disgraceful! He must have known. I'm not sure I haven't got a case against him for misrepresentation. I shall certainly demand a return of some of the money. I shall write pretty straight." Mr. Dewdney nodded severely at his wife's profile.

"Oh, don't talk nonsense!" She spoke peevishly. "Do you think he will take any notice of what you write? Not he! He's got your money. Sell the beastly car and get a horse that will go."

"You're tired, my dear," said Mr. Dewdney. "Even if I do decide to sell the car, I shall still write to Captain Bather. It's men like him who discredit motoring. It's——" He stopped speaking—Mrs. Dewdney had closed her eyes.

At a late, uncomfortable meal, Mrs. Dewdney totalled the bill for repairs and towage, and their own enforced board and lodging on various occasions; she worked out the cost of another four months, and finally persuaded her husband to advertise the car for sale, condemning his scruples with womanly assurance and arguments as to self-preservation.

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In due course the advertisement appeared, leaving much to the imagination. In this Mr. Dewdney behaved, after due consideration on the value of advertised descriptions, as he thought befitting to a member of the Bar, albeit one who had never practised. By the cold moderation of his description he incurred the angry scorn of his wife and many discouraging prophecies from Joye; but he was satisfied of the correctness of his attitude.

For five days the morning's letters were brought upstairs, and Mr. Dewdney stayed in for the second post. For five days husband and wife went to bed hoping for the morrow. Joye got more melancholy each day. On the sixth day there was triumph. A Mr. Thurston wrote to say that he would come over on Sunday to see the car, if convenient to Mr. Dewdney.

Mrs. Dewdney conducted the reply. "For goodness' sake don't sit down and write off at once!" she snapped, at the consultation after breakfast. "Do you want the man to think you are dying to sell? Wait a day at least."

Mr. Dewdney protested. "I think it would be more polite to reply by return, and it looks business-like."

"You let the politeness go hang for once!" retorted his wife. "It helped you to get swindled by Bather. It certainly isn't business, whatever it looks. You want to sell that monstrosity, don't you?"

"I certainly want to sell the car," replied Mr. Dewdney.

"Well, then, don't write till to-morrow evening. And, for goodness' sake, let Joye do the selling!"

"I shall do nothing of the sort," announced Mr. Dewdney. "Besides, I don't know what you mean. How can Joye or anyone else do the selling? Thurston will form his own opinion—at least, I suppose——"

"I should make him a present of the car, if I were you." Mrs. Dewdney looked at her husband, curling up her lip. "You've been swindled once; you might give Joye the next chance." She spoke with slow, cutting emphasis.

Eventually, after further explanations by Mrs. Dewdney, her husband agreed.

When he informed Joye, he allowed himself to express a hope that the car would be looking her best. That was Thursday. On Saturday afternoon Joye was still at work on the car, and the household wearied of the noise of her engines.

It was a period of snappy answers and dignified silences between husband and wife. The servants gained some consolation by conveying their displeasure in gloomy faces and the manners of martyrdom. Only little Margaret, the seven-year-old child of the Dewdneys' later life, enjoyed the operations for themselves. On Saturday afternoon she begged off the everyday walk, and in the evening her clothes testified to a detailed examination of the litter of greasy parts that had been strewn about the car each day. Joye explained the reason of his busy-ness with more than usual patience, being buoyed up with hope.

On Sunday morning Mr. Dewdney did not go to church. "At least I must receive the man," he protested, in reply to his wife's advice to be out of the way. It was a long morning for him. He checked an early desire to visit the coach-house, because of certain sounds emanating therefrom which testified to Joye's desecration of the Sabbath. But his methodical inspection of the flower-beds soon developed into a restless meandering about the garden. When the noises at the stables had ceased for some time, he wandered slowly round in that direction. He found Joye busy on the brasswork.

"Just a final touch up, eh, Joye?" he remarked carelessly.

"Been at it since five this morning," replied Joye.

Mr. Dewdney's face puckered. "I'm sorry. I don't like you working on Sunday." He spoke a little hurriedly.

Joye stood up, his expression full of pained surprise. His mouth opened, then he bent down again to work.

"I don't know when Mr. Thurston will be here," went on Mr. Dewdney; "the Sunday trains are very bad. I wonder the directors don't put on better ones; so many people travel on a Sunday nowadays."

"Isn't Mr. Thurston driving over?" inquired Joye.

"Of course, so he is—I forgot." Mr. Dewdney rubbed his nose. "I suppose he will want lunch. Oh, by the way, Joye, I shouldn't stand out for a pound or two." Mr. Dewdney looked away as Joye stood up again. "I mean—that is, anything over a couple of hundred I should close with. You understand?"

"I suppose you will take anything you can get, really?" asked Joye.

"Well, you are going to do the selling, you know, Joye." Mr. Dewdney rubbed his nose again. "You must do the best

you can. Yes, I'm not anxious to keep her."

Joye smiled—a grim, weary smile. "Then I am to sell her at any price?"

"Well, of course"—Mr. Dewdney hesitated—"I think she should fetch two hundred." He spoke decidedly.

"Am I to sell her the best I can, or am I to stand out for your two hundred?" asked Joye. "I'd just like to know, sir."

Mr. Dewdney shifted his feet. "Yes, yes, sell her the best you can, certainly. She does you credit, Joye—she really does look well. What a pity she—— She does look well!"

Joye looked gratified. "Well, you see, sir"—he spoke slowly—"some will buy a thing that looks nice on chance. We know she don't go." Mr. Dewdney winced. "She's pretty sure to stick in her trial," Joye continued, with a certain callous honesty, "and I thought perhaps a bit of extra work on her appearance might just pull it off. Of course, if she do happen to go, by a lucky chance—well, it all helps on the price."

"Yes, yes," murmured Mr. Dewdney, turning away. He looked distressed.

"I'll just run her back into the coach-house," announced Joye.

"But why?" Mr. Dewdney turned back; then he frowned, biting his lip, as if he wished he had not spoken.

"Well, sir," replied Joye, "it's this way. Mr. Thurston might think we had been tinkering her up for him if he was to find her out here—buyers are so suspicious. You can't be too careful when it comes to selling a wrong 'un." Mr. Dewdney winced again. "Do you mind giving me a hand, sir?" continued Joye.

Mr. Dewdney hesitated; his face worked.

"If you would just push on that wheel, please, sir," explained Joye.

Mr. Dewdney heaved, bracing his shoulders; he seemed about to speak. Then he stooped and pushed.

As he emerged from the coach-house, the flop of hoofs and the crunch of wheels on gravel sounded loud. A carriage was coming down the drive.

"Only just in time," murmured Joye. Then he suddenly slipped back into the coach-house.

A strained look came over Mr. Dewdney's face as a dogcart trundled into sight. Two men sat in it. His hands began to work; he crooked one finger into his collar, giving it a little tug, then he rubbed his nose. He remembered his wife's scornful warning to let Joye do the selling. He looked wildly round, rather like a startled hare. But the horse stopped, and he walked mechanically forward. A large, stout man got down, smiling. "Mr. Dewdney?" he inquired.

"Yes." Mr. Dewdney moved his lips as if his mouth was dry.

"I'm Mr. Thurston," the large man was saying. "Missed my road, or I should have been here earlier."

"Oh, yes!" Mr. Dewdney managed to smile.

Just then Joye emerged from the coach-house, shutting the doors with some deliberation. He marched up. "Shall you be wanting the car again this morning, sir?" he inquired.

Mr. Dewdney gaped, turning to stare at Joye; but Joye's blank eyes were fixed on the middle distance. The surprise in Mr. Dewdney's eyes changed quickly as he realised the full significance of Joye's question. He frowned, commanding Joye to bring out the car for Mr. Thurston's inspection. His tone cut with icy disapproval. Joye touched his hat with a respectful look towards Mr. Thurston.

"Been a fine morning for motoring, I should think," said Mr. Thurston.

Mr. Dewdney started, stared, opened his mouth; then he nodded and his lips moved. He shifted his feet and his face puckered. He had a feeling that he had been caught, and felt ashamed for nodding in reply to the question. He was conscious that Mr. Thurston was saying something, but he knew not what. His mind was working on Joye's suggestive inquiry; his anger grew as he realised how impossible it was for him to correct the misrepresentation.

"I beg your pardon," he said with a jerk. Mr. Thurston had spoken again.

"Your garden is looking well," repeated Mr. Thurston, smiling a little.

"Yes, yes—that is, I mean"—Mr. Dewdney pulled himself up—"it is very good of you to say so," he said quite slowly.

While the two men waited for the car, Mr. Thurston talked carelessly as men do who wait to discuss more serious matters. Mr. Dewdney answered properly enough, but his brain was a turmoil of thoughts. He wondered how he could pass the negotiations on to Joye—whether this stout man who was talking so much knew anything about motors. Suddenly his mind jerked back to listen.

"I've been thinking of starting a car for months," Mr. Thurston was saying—"been

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studying the advertisements. Best to begin on a second-hand car, don't you agree?"

Mr. Dewdney was silent. He sighed. The tension in his brain seemed to stop, a great calm enveloped him. Then he remembered to answer. "Oh, yes, certainly—always, I should say." His voice sounded to him as if he was smiling, so he frowned. Instinctively he looked at the young man seated in the dogcart.

Mr. Thurston seemed to realise his thoughts. "My man has been learning up in Town," he said. "Picked it up deuced quick, I think. Can he put the mare up somewhere while he inspects the car?"

Mr. Dewdney sighed.

Mr. Thurston repeated his request.

"Certainly, certainly," replied Mr. Dewdney—"in here." He moved quickly to the door of a loose-box, pulling it open. "In here."

Mr. Thurston nodded to the young man, who got down and began taking the mare out.

"Nice animal that," remarked Mr. Dewdney, smiling. Now that he knew the stout man was no expert, he felt a sort of friendliness towards him. "So you have never driven?" he inquired, as they turned to watch the car emerging.

"No," replied Mr. Thurston; "horses have been my hobby so far. But you must have a car; everybody has these days."

"Yes," replied Mr. Dewdney, speaking louder with a certain expansive geniality, "everyone seems to have one. They are a great con——" He broke off, repeating himself hurriedly: "Yes, everybody seems to have one. Wonderful how many people have one."

"It is. Why are you selling?" asked Mr. Thurston.

Mr. Dewdney's smile smoothed out, and his shoulders hitched suddenly. His forehead puckered. "Well, the fact is—er—you see, she is a big car." Then a defiant sort of look came over his face. He spoke more quickly. "I think—a smaller car—— I'm not as young as I was. She is a big car, you see." He glanced at Mr. Thurston.

"Going in for a smaller one, eh?" suggested Mr. Thurston. "Generally the other way about, isn't it? P'raps you're right."

"Of course, she is nothing out of the ordinary in size," explained Mr. Dewdney hurriedly. "The fact is, I'm not sure I'm not a bit nervous—hee, hee!" His little laugh stopped suddenly, and he looked distressed. He was uncomfortably conscious that his remarks were hardly an accurate reason for his selling. He felt guilty. But he justified himself quickly—he might get a smaller car, he was nervous—and, after all, the man was going to have a trial. He decided his remarks were permissible generalities of a sale—of no importance. He forgot his audience. Joye was waiting for instructions.

The young man appeared. Mr. Thurston nodded him towards the car. "He'll just look her over for me," he explained.

Then the inspection began.

Joye behaved curiously. He seemed to have suddenly developed a grievance. His exhibition was most thorough, but he explained the special features of the car with a plaintive air, which might quite easily have been taken for affectionate regret. The young man was poking about the car with Joye, nodding every now and then. Joye was murmuring the whole time.

Mr. Dewdney talked continually to his companion, but he watched, listening to hear Joye's grumbled remarks. Stray phrases reached him occasionally.

"Beautiful engines . . ." The two men were peering in beneath the bonnet. ". . . Bit of driving . . . car for nervous folk."

The young man looked up at Mr. Dewdney with open curiosity.

Mr. Dewdney turned away, talking rapidly.

"Has done fifty . . ." he heard. ". . . thinking of summonses . . . nerves . . . allowed to open her out . . ."

Mr. Dewdney fumed, though he still chatted to Mr. Thurston. From what he heard, it was obvious that Joye was making up a tale of nervousness as the reason of the sale. He imagined the implied description of himself, and it made him feel furious; he also objected to the deceit. He stepped forward, on an impulse to speak, but he only pinched the front tyre—he realised he could say nothing. He turned back to Mr. Thurston. "Nothing like ocular demonstration," he said, smiling. Instantly he felt annoyed, because his words sounded rather misleading; he wished he had gone to church, after all. Mr. Thurston was saying something, but Mr. Dewdney was listening to catch Joye's remarks.

"Yes, fifty . . . not here . . . never . . ." The two men were examining the indicator inside. "No sportsman," Mr. Dewdney heard. "Fat old horses . . ." The young man eyed him again, smiling.

Mr. Dewdney bit his lip. He determined to speak to Joye afterwards. At the same

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time he began to hope. The young man had moved away and was examining the general appearance of the car. Joye still murmured into his ear, making him smile. Then suddenly Joye left him and came up to

Mr. Thurston nodded. "Right you are—may as well."

Mr. Dewdney fumbled with the door-handle. As he followed into the car, he forgot all his scruples and his anger against

"'Daddy, daddy,' she shrilled out breathlessly, 'have you been able to make the motor-car go?'"

Mr. Dewdney. "Shall I take Mr. Thurston for a run?" he asked meekly.

Mr. Dewdney swallowed as if he had something unpleasant in his throat. He looked at Mr. Thurston; he cleared his throat. "Shall we take a little spin in her?" His voice sounded husky.

Joye; he only felt a strange sickness. As he sat down, he spoke hurriedly. "Always well to see how she goes. What? I think you will find her comfort——"

Joye had walked to the front of the car to start her. Mr. Dewdney moistened his lips.

Then the hum and vibration of the car

began. Joye jumped up, and the car moved off down the drive, running smoothly.

Mr. Dewdney leaned back and sighed, then he began to talk fast, going from one subject to another with a certain nervous rapidity. He spoke of tyre-treads, of the statutory limit, of petrol gauges, of anything that came into his head to do with motors. As the car continued to buzz along, he gained confidence. "Good way of getting about, you know," he remarked. "Spoils you for horses, I can tell you." He kept glancing at Mr. Thurston; he thought he was a little silent.

In front, Joye was jerking comments at the young man by his side. Mr. Dewdney argued with himself that he was not responsible for what Joye said; he also realised that it might help to sell the car. After all, perhaps the car was all right, he thought; engines did get right, he knew.

They were on the return journey. Mr. Dewdney was feeling exhilarated. The car was running beautifully.

"She's running well," remarked Mr. Thurston.

"H'm, yes," replied Mr. Dewdney, managing to get the proper carelessness into his tone. In reality he was tingling. Thoughts were racing through his mind. He decided he would do the negotiations—Joye might not ask enough. He even thought of three hundred. He would begin directly they got out.

The car swept into the drive. Joye stopped her exactly where they had started. Mr. Dewdney got out, keeping his face serious, though his eyes sparkled.

"Very nice," remarked Mr. Thurston.

Mr. Dewdney turned, smiling. Mr. Thurston was looking at the young man; the young man inclined his head ever so slightly. Mr. Dewdney stepped forward to feel an imaginary cut on the near front tyre, waiting for Mr. Thurston to speak.

The four men stood in expectant silence, studying the car.

Just then there was a quick scrape of rushing feet on the gravel behind them. The four men looked up. Little Margaret was scampering down the drive, sawing the air with her arms, her Prayer Book clutched.

"My little girl," murmured Mr. Dewdney, smiling; but he was conscious of a sudden sickening nervousness of disaster.

Little Margaret came bounding towards them, her face aglow with excitement. "Daddy, daddy," she shrilled out breathlessly, "have you been able to make the motor-car go?"

Joye said something quick to himself; the young man looked at Mr. Thurston; Mr. Thurston looked at Mr. Dewdney and smiled; Mr. Dewdney smiled back, but there was no joy in his smile. The child stopped, uncertain of the silence. That completed the tableau.

The next ten minutes dragged out with awkward utterances. At last the dogcart was ready.

"Well, many thanks," said Mr. Thurston, shaking hands. "I think I've seen all I want to." There was a twinkle in his eyes as he shook hands with little Margaret.

"Yes," murmured Mr. Dewdney. "And—er—do you think—shall you be making an offer?" His voice proclaimed his hopelessness.

"I'll write and let you know. Good-bye," said Mr. Thurston, as he got up into his dogcart. He was still smiling as he drove off.

Then Mr. Dewdney spoke a little of what he felt. Most of his eloquence was directed against children rushing about and screaming on Sundays. Little Margaret left to spend the rest of the day in her room, sobbing out her childish dismay.

The following week the car was sold by auction in London for ninety-seven pounds.

OF LOVE.

SHE who shares with love her peace
Hath of her gift a sweet increase;
When her cup of tears she parts,
More her tears, and more her smarts!

What recks it, then? Squander your all!
Love still is economical!

FRANCIS MEYNELL.

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"PARLIAMENT OFFERING THE CROWN TO WILLIAM AND MARY, 1689." BY E. M. WARD, R.A.
From the fresco in the House of Commons.

ENGLAND'S STORY IN PORTRAIT AND PICTURE.

XXX. THE REIGN OF WILLIAM AND MARY.

1689-1694. WILLIAM III., 1689—1702.

THE invitation to William, Prince of Orange, was signed by Compton, Bishop of London, by Danby and Shrewsbury, and by other notable persons. He was begged to come as the husband of the heiress of the kingdoms, the child first born to James being regarded as supposititious. Briefly let us speak of his past. He was not only the husband of James's eldest daughter, but the grandson of Charles I., being the only child of Mary, the martyr-king's eldest daughter, who was born in 1631, and married in 1641 to William of Nassau. William, their son, was born November 4, 1650, eight days after his father's death. He had had a stormy youth, and had not won the Stadtholdership of the United Provinces without struggle and intrigue. It was observed that he had pensioned the murderer of De Witt, who had kept him out of office. He was not thought to be a scrupulous person. It had been necessary for the English chaplain at his court to speak to him as to his behaviour to his wife. But she was devoted to him, and, in the negotiations which followed his arrival in England, effaced herself with entire self-denial. Most people in England wished Mary to be queen,

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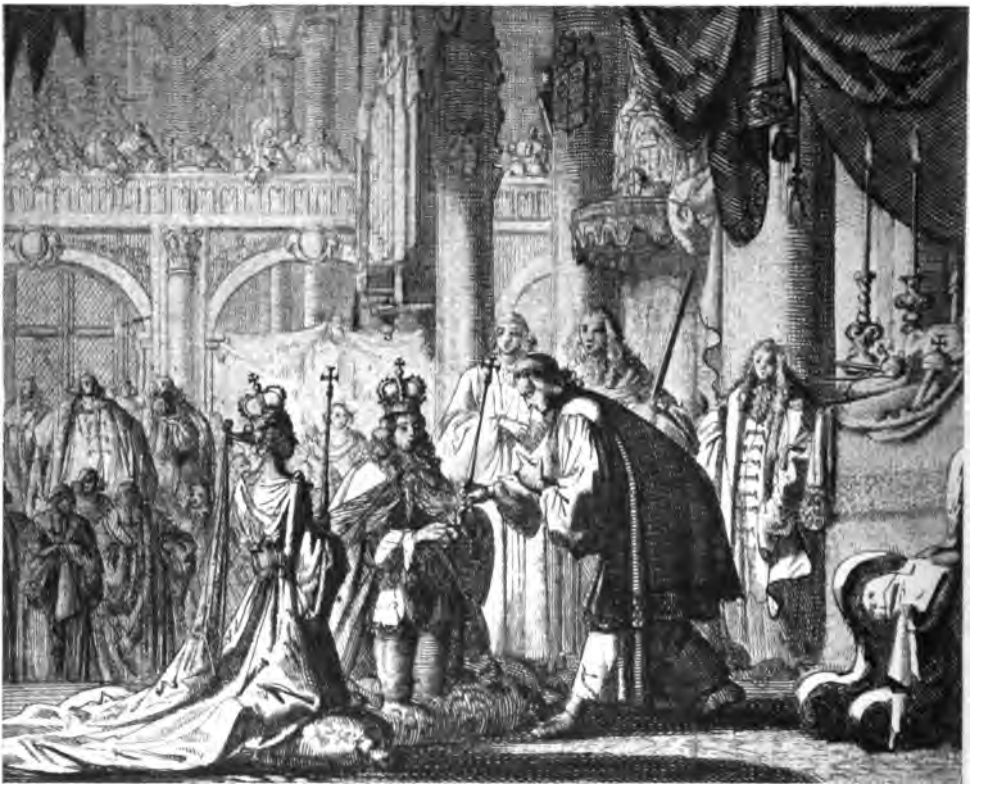
but first a Convention—that is, a Parliament not summoned by the king who had fled, but by William himself—confirmed his authority and settled the question as to what should be done. Finally, it was decided that "the late King James, having, by the advice of Jesuits and other wicked persons, withdrawn himself from the realm, hath abdicated the throne." And then, after much discussion, and when William had refused to be his wife's "gentleman-usher," it was agreed as they liked when England had for sovereign one who had large European interests to be concerned with. So Presbyterianism was formally established north of the Tweed, and the Whig lords of Scotland had the country at their feet. In Ireland the English revolution had to be enforced at the point of the sword.

The interest of the earlier months of the reign of William and Mary is concentrated in the three kingdoms thus: In England,



THE CORONATION OF WILLIAM AND MARY, 1689.
From an old Dutch engraving.

that "our Sovereign Lord and Lady are, and are declared to be, King and Queen."

This was the glorious revolution of which historians tell us that it was caused and accompanied by an amount of corruption unparalleled in English history. In England it was accepted, for the most part, with complacency; but there was a conspicuous, if small, exception.

In Scotland it was welcomed with enthusiasm. William was a staunch Calvinist, and wore his hat in church. The Scots lords saw that they could rule their kingdom

Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, the leader of the resistance to the illegal demands of James II., and seven other bishops, with two deans and four archdeacons, declined to take the oaths to the new sovereign. They did not believe that they could repudiate the oath which they had already taken to the banished king, for whom they certainly had no personal sympathy, but to whom they believed they were bound in "passive obedience," that is, to obey his commands, or, if they could not do so conscientiously, to suffer whatever his displeasure might order.

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"THE CORONATION OF WILLIAM III. AND MARY: THE OBLATION OF THE SWORD."
BY T. WALTER WILSON, R.I.

They gave up all they had, and died in poverty and obscurity—

> True as the dial to the sun,
> Although it be not shin'd upon.

Among them was Ken, author of the immortal Morning and Evening hymns, and one of the glories of the English Church. And the lay "non-jurors" included some of the most learned men in England. Their secession was a severe blow to the Church; but the result showed that it was a grave error to give up the service of the nation in religion for

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a political reason. The non-jurors gradually dwindled away. The leaders died off, and were replaced by men of less eminence. As late as 1745, some who held firm to their principles suffered death for putting them into practice; but, for the most part, the non-jurors lived obscurely and died peacefully.

In Scotland, those who stood for James were driven northwards, and the famous Grahame of Claverhouse, "Bonny Dundee," was killed at the battle of Killiecrankie, July 27, 1689, when the resistance to William soon ceased.

English peerages, were Dutch. When Irish lands were confiscated, he gave them, without the knowledge of Parliament, to his Dutch friends. He made no effort to win the affections of his new subjects.

Even in private life, as his great admirer, Bishop Burnet, says, "he spoke seldom, and that with a disgusting dryness." In public he seemed stern, reserved, selfish. Nor did he accept with pleasure the limits which were now placed on the constitutional powers of the Crown. The Declaration of Right, which became the Bill of

JAMES II. LANDING AT KINSALE, 1689.

From a Dutch print published in 1690.

In Ireland it was very different. James himself came to Dublin, held a Parliament, and resisted the English and Dutch troops till he was defeated at the famous battle of the Boyne, July 1, 1690.

By the end of that year, in spite of the defeat of the English and Dutch fleets off Beachy Head, June 30, the new sovereigns were safely settled on the throne. From this date William spent much of his time in Holland, and he became exceedingly unpopular in England. He did not like England or the English. His friends, such as Bentinck and Keppel, to whom he gave

Rights, besides dissolving the illegal courts and condemning the illegal acts of the late reign, declared against the lawfulness of the dispensing and suspending power "as it hath been exercised of late." But William continued to exercise it, though for the purpose of giving office to foreign Protestants, not to English Papists. And he gave England no conspicuous success to atone for his constant absence. His great aim in life was to resist the ascendancy of France; he felt so keenly in the matter that he regarded Louis XIV. as a personal enemy. But when he came to command an army, he

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failed conspicuously. He failed to raise the siege of Namur; he was defeated at Steenkirk. As a soldier he was only an amateur, and amateur soldiers hardly ever succeed.

While William was spending English money and shedding English blood in the Low Countries for a very doubtful benefit to Great Britain, which has in France no

WILLIAM III., KING OF ENGLAND 1689–1702.
From the portrait by Pieter Van D r Werff.

"natural enemy," but rather a country whose interests may well combine with our own, his patient, clever wife kept England at peace, and delicately adjusted the contentious claims of selfish statesmen. She trusted few—and especially she did not trust John Churchill, Lord Marlborough, who was to become the greatest of English generals—but steadily held her own in loyalty to her husband and careful religious observance, while she felt in her heart that her usurpation of the throne was wrong. The reign of William and Mary was, in truth, a time of great restlessness, when no one felt satisfied and few felt secure.

The most important features of the reign internally were those connected with finance. Taxation rose very high, and the National Debt was created. Already, before William died, the interest on it was over a million pounds. At first it seemed a sign of the nation's financial straits; soon it came to be regarded rather as an expression of stability, and there is no doubt that during many generations it acted as a steadying force. At the same time was founded what has become an institution of world-wide renown—the Bank of England, a corporation of merchants which gave a large loan to the Government, and received the right to issue bank-notes to be paid in cash on presentation. If the reign of William and Mary were noted for nothing more, it would be famous for the creation of the National Debt and the Bank of England.

But it was famous also for the final establishment of an institution of a very different kind—a regular standing army. The idea of this had long been profoundly unpopular in England. After each war the kings had been obliged to disband their armies. Cromwell and James II. had alike incurred much odium by keeping an army in time of peace. But now that the general increase of European armaments and the danger from France made a permanent force necessary, the national dislike was overcome largely through the passing of a Mutiny Act, which gave the Crown power to deal with any paid soldier by martial

MARY, QUEEN OF ENGLAND 1689–1694.
From the portrait by Jan Van Der Vaart.

law. This Act—now called the Army Act—has been passed annually ever since, and has the incidental effect of making it necessary to have a Parliament sitting every year.

But still it was long before the nation got reconciled to the sight of soldiers in the streets, and Parliament, to the king's great indignation, but to the people's satisfaction,

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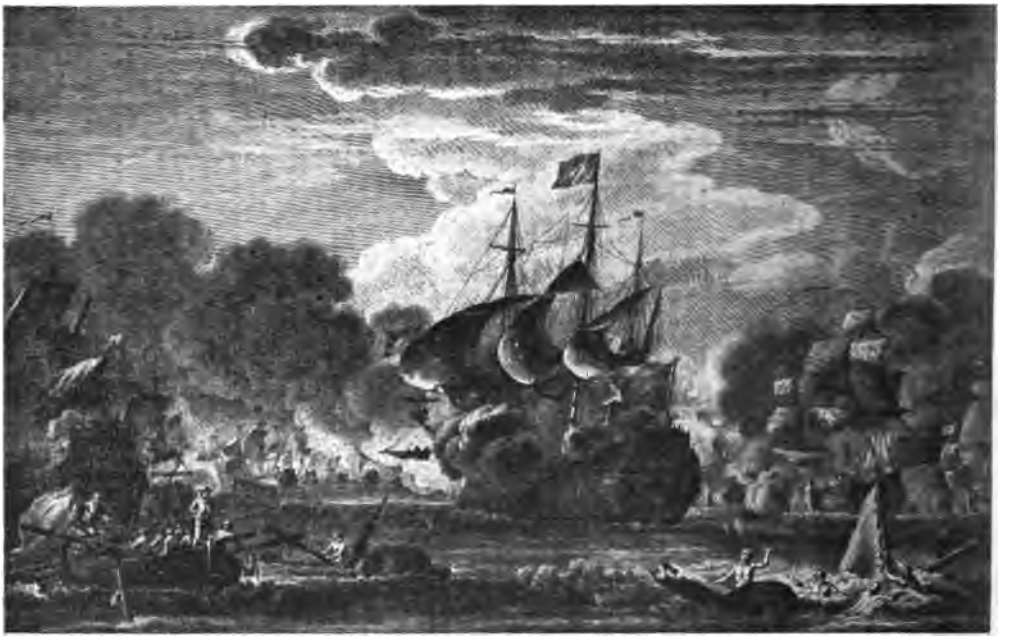
compelled William to dismiss his Dutch guards.

So the Dutchman sat uneasily on the throne. Whigs and Tories oscillated into power, but the idea of party government was not developed. Sunderland, who had advised James II. to the same effect, induced William to form a homogeneous ministry. The year 1696 is thus famous in the history of the British Constitution.

Before this, on December 28, 1694, the good Queen Mary had passed away. Her influence had chiefly been felt in Church matters, where she gave her sympathy to the "Broad Church" Tillotson, who was made to alienate the ordinary clergy from the revolution dynasty.

On Mary's death, William III., in consequence of the Declaration of Right, became king. He did nothing to increase his popularity. Plots against him were frequent. In Scotland he became unpopular with different sections by abandoning the Scots colonists who had attempted to colonise the isthmus of Darien to their fate, as, indeed, he was obliged to do for fear of foreign complications, and by his concern—at least, his formal sanction—in the "Massacre of Glencoe." The chief of Glencoe, MacIan Macdonald, had given in his submission to



"THE BATTLE OF BEACHY HEAD, 1690." BY N. OZANNE.

Archbishop of Canterbury when Sancroft was deprived. He and Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, with Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, who leaned more to "High Church" principles—a phrase just now coming into use—were the leaders of Church life after the non-jurors were deprived. Tenison, who succeeded Tillotson in the same month as the queen's death, was of the same party. After his wife's death, William, who never loved her so well as when she was gone, and vowed amendment of life at her graveside, appointed a commission of Whig and Latitudinarian bishops to advise him as to all Church appointments, which did a great deal

the Government as late as possible. When he came to Fort William on December 31, 1691, he was sent on, because there was no magistrate, to Inverary, where his oath was received. Sir John Dalrymple, Master of Stair, William's Scottish Secretary, was determined, however, to destroy the resisters, and induced the king to sign an order to "extirpate that set of thieves," and the Campbells, their hereditary enemies, were entrusted with the cruel work. It was performed with every circumstance of treachery and brutality. Not for three years was the indignation of all but the bitterest partisans able to procure an investigation of the crime,

"WILLIAM III. AT THE BATTLE OF THE BOYNE, 1690." BY SIR BENJAMIN WEST, P.R.A.

Reproduced from a plate published by Messrs. Virtue & Co.

"THE BATTLE OF LA HOGUE, 1692." BY SIR BENJAMIN WEST, P.R.A.

From the original in the collection of the Duke of Westminster. A copy by Chambers is in the Greenwich Gallery.

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and when the Scottish Parliament established the guilt of Breadalbane and Stair, and prayed William to vindicate his own character by punishing them, nothing was done, as, indeed, nothing could be, for the king, intentionally or not, was responsible.

Each year William went to Holland and carried on war with very little success. At home politicians were restless. A plot to assassinate the king in 1696 was followed by many executions, the most notable being that of Sir John Fenwick, against whom the antiquated and unjust method of a Bill of Attainder was employed, since there was not sufficient evidence to condemn him by legal process.

In 1697 the Peace of Ryswick ended the long war with France, and Louis XIV. recognised William as King of England. In the same year England had the most remarkable of contemporary sovereigns, Peter the Great of Russia, dwelling at Deptford—a very unpleasant tenant of the excellent Mr. Evelyn—and studying shipbuilding. The last years of the reign were occupied with negotiations as to the expected break-up of the Spanish monarchy, on the death of the last of the descendants of the great Emperor

"ENGLISH EXPLORERS IN AUSTRALIA, 1688: CAPTAIN DAMPIER'S FIRST SIGHT OF A BOOMERANG." BY R. CATON WOODVILLE.

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"PETER THE GREAT AT DEPTFORD DOCKYARD" BY DANIEL MACLISE, R.A.

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Charles V., who was Charles I. of Spain. Partition treaties were suggested and discussed, and the great Whig Chancellor, Lord Somers, even set the Great Seal of England to blank paper, on which the king and his favourite, Bentinck, might set down what they pleased. But when Charles of Spain died in 1700, he was found to have left his dominions to Philip of Anjou, grandson of Louis XIV. "There are Pyrenees no more," said Louis; but there was a great war instead. Louis recognised James Edward, the boy born in 1688, as King of England when James II. died on September 6, 1701, and war broke out again. William's throne seemed doubly insecure. He had no children. Anne, the surviving sister of his late wife, had lost child after child in succession, and on the death of her little son, the Duke of Gloucester, in 1700, it became necessary to provide for the succession. The Act of Succession, 1700, decreed that the crown should go, in default of heirs to Anne, or, after her, to William, to the Electress Sophia of Hanover, granddaughter of James I., and daughter of that gallant Princess Elizabeth whose marriage to the Elector Palatine, "The Winter King," had seemed a triumph for Protestantism in the days of the first Stuart king of England.

On February 21, 1702, William was thrown by his horse stumbling on a mole-hill. He received an injury from which he never recovered, and he died at Kensington on March 8. Jacobites—those who longed for the return of the male heir of James II.—accepted Anne with some doubtfulness, but they toasted "the little gentleman in black velvet" who had been the cause of the Dutchman's death. In truth, William had never succeeded as he might have done. He saved England from a Roman Catholic propaganda and an obstinate, stupid king; but he cared little for the kingdom he had delivered, save as a means of providing money for his great project of destroying a rival Power. And this he had to leave for others to do. Yet, unsympathetic though he was, it is impossible to regard William without a real interest, something of respect, and a great deal of pity. Like many ambitious and ruthless men, he achieved the object of his ambition, only to find how unsatisfactory was the triumph he had won. He was a Protestant hero, but few were enthusiastic for him so long as he was king.

LILAC.

SWEET lilac is a serving-maid
In homely garments drest,
Wistaria is a dainty queen,
Laburnum in gay robes is seen;
I like the lilac best.

Wistaria is dream-delicate,
Laburnum's flaunting joy;
Sweet lilac stands for open love—
A country girl and boy.
Let others dream, and joy to madness:
Give me the lilac's simple gladness!

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

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THE LAUGHING LIEUTENANT.

By EMMA BROOKE,

Author of "A Superfluous Woman," "The House of Robershaye," etc.

ON a June evening, not many years ago, an old Anglo-Indian was entertaining a dinner-party at his modest house in Chelsea. It was his pleasure to gather around him men distinguished in the Indian Service, both military and civil, and amongst the guests was a General Sherwin, a soldier long retired from the Army, and of a noticeably quiet habit, but of marked eminence in the past. It happened that a Commissioner home on leave from the Punjab was present, and when the board was cleared for dessert, the concerns of that territory came under discussion. As it chanced, a district of somewhat dreary repute was mentioned, and at this point General Sherwin leaned across the table towards the Commissioner, his old face changing under some reminiscence.

"You know that part?" said he, breaking with animation into the talk. "Perhaps you have crossed the arid tract lying between the out-station J—— and the hamlet of Moolmein? On that tract, where the jâl trees have sprung up more closely than in other parts, is a cairn of white stones."

He paused, and, a sudden attention having gripped the company, began to trace with his finger on the damask an imaginary map.

"Here you have to the north-east," he continued, "the out-station J——, here is the desert I spoke of, there to the south-west is the village of Moolmein, and here, a little apart from the hamlet, stands the house of Hossein Bukhs Khan. In the middle of the desert you would find the cairn of white stones. Near by lies buried the body——"

Again he hesitated, and, glancing round the circle of guests younger than himself, an expression of uncertainty and sadness passed over his face.

"I forget that I am looking back forty years," said he. "The cairn of white stones has doubtless crumbled, the body that lies near long mouldered, Hossein Bukhs has been gathered to his fathers, and it may be that the desert tract has been redeemed. But, if you care to hear it, I can tell you a story, strange indeed, and one the memory of which has cut deeply into my life."

A murmur of eager assent ran round the table, and he began.

"It was on a hot afternoon in the middle 'sixties, when the —— Company of H.M.'s Punjab Fusiliers, of which I had then the honour to be Captain, came into camp near J——, which is, as you know, one of the loneliest stations in the Punjab. Our spirits were not particularly gay as we outspanned for an indefinite sojourn in the stifling plains under the burning sky.

"The occasion of our arrival was the report of some disaffection amongst the natives. This disaffection was by no means acute, but the cause was not clear, and it was considered necessary to introduce a military influence into a district which had been for some years under the control of a single Civil servant. The official in charge was Assistant Commissioner Sowerby.

"On the evening of our arrival, two despatches were brought into camp, bearing the inscription 'Urgent,' and Major Lascelles, in command of our company, spent some time with me in consultation over them. The first and most important contained serious imputations against Hossein Bukhs, the native of high rank whom I have already mentioned. The second, from Hossein Bukhs himself, laid before us certain grievances. On the coming day we were expecting the ceremonious visit of this gentleman, as also of some of the chief natives in J——.

"While we were still deep in our consultation, and coming to a clearer apprehension of the difficulties of our errand, we heard voices near, and then a laugh, a delicious chuckle of amusement, and two lieutenants of ours, Fleetwood and Mayson, passed the entrance of the tent. 'Bobby' was our usual appellation for the latter. Fleetwood was a man of middle height, strong, plain features, and a

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grave, reticent manner; Mayson was tall and handsome, of an indomitable cheeriness of nature, and endowed with all the attractions of demeanour that Fleetwood lacked. Between the two existed an incomparable friendship.

"We watched them in silence. They had had a hard day, yet, on Mayson's suggestion, drew towards a group of hot and weary men who were dealing more or less resentfully with a portion of the supplies, and there lent a hand. Again and again we heard Bobby's delightful laughter, and noted the inspiriting effect, every face wearing an answering grin, while the work began to go merrily.

"'Sherwin,' said the Major, 'I believe that Bobby is the man for our job.'

"Next day, at an early hour, we received the native gentlemen of J——, and following close on their heels came Bukhs and his retinue from Moolmein. The manners of Bukhs were highly courteous, and he had a dignified and pleasing presence. On this occasion business was limited to an assurance that his despatch should receive attention, and with this he appeared satisfied. Before he and his train rode away, the Major was careful to introduce Bobby and to leave the two in conversation alone.

"Rather late in the afternoon, when the native ceremonial was over, Sowerby rode into camp. Both the Major and I were favourably impressed with him, but it was obvious that the man was overworked. In figure he was above middle height, and stooped from the shoulder, walking with his head thrust forward. Prolonged loneliness had produced a habit of falling into sudden silences, when he would fix his eyes on the ground as though overmastered by some dominant thought. But he knew every corner of his district, and in conversation was interesting, as anyone is bound to be who has his business or his subject at his finger-ends.

"A very short inquiry enabled us to distinguish Hossein Bukhs Khan as the perplexing riddle in the whole affair, Sowerby representing him as crafty and dangerous. Clearly it was our business to search out the truth with unbiassed minds.

"The Major adhered to his choice of Mayson as a principal instrument in dealing with the problem. After a few weeks, during which he had more and more associated the young officer with Sowerby and his work, the Major found an excuse to send him out alone to Hossein Bukhs as his emissary on a point which seemed on the face of it capable of adjustment by diplomacy.

"I recall the incident of his return. Sowerby was in camp, and he, the Major, and myself were sitting in the shade of a tent, when Bobby rode in with his escort. At the invitation of the Major, he immediately reported, standing by his horse and giving a brief, clear-headed account, which summed up to this—the matter could be, in effect, peacefully settled by a little deft arrangement of competing interests.

"Having reported, Bobby moved off, and a silence, rather awkward for us, ensued. It was broken by his gay voice at a distance, and his infectious laughter, and by the answering mirth of one or two of our fellows. I remarked that a couple of sentries marching to their posts grinned out of pure sympathy.

"'Well, that's right enough,' said the Major tentatively, turning towards Sowerby.

"Sowerby's hand twitched, and he spilt some of the tobacco with which he was about to fill his pipe.

"'It appears so,' said he after an interval, during which he had stared fixedly before him, his face grave, his lips compressed; 'but I repeat that Bukhs is a dangerous man. Presently you will find that out for yourselves.'

"Sowerby welcomed the association of Bobby with himself, falling from the beginning into the common attitude towards the young officer. You surmise, I think, that Mayson was a supreme favourite with us of the company? Honestly, I have not met his match. The Major was resolute in his determination to spread this wholesome influence throughout the district, and henceforth we missed Bobby a good deal from camp. He would stay for two or three nights at a time in J——, and would also ride long distances to make inquiries amongst the natives on the spot, when any rather bewildering case had been brought into Cutcherry. Under the exercise of his persuasive powers, thus purposely extended wherever possible, the clouds began to disperse. Practically the disaffection was over, things were comfortably disposed again, and we began to hope that our stay in the plains, where the heat began to be unendurable, need not be prolonged.

"And then the thunderbolt fell."

Here the narrator, overcome by some heart-searching reminiscence, paused, while the guests about the table waited in suspense. Presently he raised his head again and lifted his hand solemnly.

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"Gentlemen," said he, "as I think, the tragical, the shocking, leaps upon us always suddenly. The heart will grant it no place till it comes. I speak now of an event for which not one of our company was prepared.

"'I've got a clue,' he whispered."

It is possible, however, that you may surmise what was that cairn of white stones I spoke of?

"Yes, gentlemen, we raised the monument where we found the dead body of Bobby Mayson half concealed under a jâl tree of the desert. We buried all that remained of him in a grave not far from the cairn. At the news of his death, a groan, a cry of lamentation rose up from the camp as from a single throat, for in the heart of every man his memory was fragrant."

Once more the General paused, nervously fingering his wine-glass, as a low ejaculation passed round the board.

"That he had been foully murdered was clear," he continued, when his emotion was mastered. "He was found with his hands tied behind his back by the tough fibre of a jungle plant, his head being gashed by blows dealt, probably, as he lay unconscious on the ground. This form of murder is, as you know, common in the Punjab, and indicates vengeance.

"The event settled the question of whether our company should leave the district or not, the deed pointing to a silent, deep-seated disaffection, more serious than we had dreamed.

"It appeared—and of this intention we had been aware—that Bobby, on his own initiative, had ridden out to Moolmein alone, bearing with him certain papers for the hand of Hossein Bukhs. But we did not know that it had been arranged between him and Sowerby that he should, on his return, report straight to the Major. When

Sowerby, anxious as to the result of the mission, rode into camp one morning to inquire, we learned for the first time that Bobby was missing.

"The business on which the papers touched was the most delicate of the affairs that had to be settled before the camp could break up. The Major saw in a moment the gravity of the situation, and a search party was sent out. The bringing in of the body discovered to us one small fact—no papers were upon it, the inference being that they had been delivered and the murder committed on the return journey.

"Bukhs and his household, however, vigorously denied having seen the Lieutenant on the day in question. We had nothing to support our suspicions until, three weeks after Mayson's burial and the raising of the cairn, a couple of native policemen arrived hot-foot in camp, bearing a blood-red envelope marked with the word 'Zaroor.' The envelope contained the information that Mayson's horse had been discovered tethered in a wretched hovel in Moolmein.

"To Moolmein, therefore, the Major despatched me to make general inquiries, and as my colleague in the errand I selected, at his own request, Lieutenant Fleetwood, between whom and Mayson, you will remember, had existed an uncommon friendship.

"We left camp early in the day, and, after riding some little distance through paddy-fields, came to a small patch of jungle, beyond which lay twelve miles of desert without human habitation and destitute of landmarks. Here, neither of us being familiar with the way, we paused to consult as to the wisdom of looking for a guide. But this trouble we were spared, for we heard a horse on the road we had come by, and in the rider presently recognised Sowerby. Upon hearing our dilemma, he offered to accompany us; and thus it came about that we entered on the desert a party of three.

"The scene was desolate in the extreme—no grass, no green things to be seen, save that out of the hard-baked earth sprang up at intervals the great green balls of the jâl trees with their low-growing branches. But the tract had a wild beauty which impressed me—a beauty of monotony, of extent and long-sweeping lines, and the solemnity of loneliness and devastation. We rode for the most part in silence, the sky as burning brass above. Sowerby led, taking us, as I think, by a short cut, for, on the way out, we did not come within sight of the cairn of white stones, yet I am sure that the thought of Bobby's cruel death gripped the hearts of all of us.

"On reaching Moolmein, we went about the village making general inquiries. Finally we called at the residence of Hossein Bukhs. I confess that this native gentleman had impressed me favourably at each encounter. To-day, however, the sharp cross-examination to which Sowerby subjected him provoked, in spite of his fine Eastern self-control, some evident perturbation. Yet with all our efforts, Sowerby doing good service in the cause, the information we gathered in Moolmein was meagre and contradictory. At last, wearied out and disheartened, we made ready to return.

"It was nearing sunset when we re-entered the desert, and if I had been impressed before by the uncommon beauty of the scene, this time I was overwhelmed by the magical effect and depth of the colouring. The hard-baked earth assumed a reflected glory from the crimsoning skies, and the lines of the horizon, long and sweeping, melted into an illimitable distance, while the great balls of the jâl trees lost their defined colour and became velvet-black, gold-hazed smudges against a vault of fire. In the east, a wonderful note of contrast, rose up the silver disc of a full moon. We were all silent. For my part, I could not have spoken, so great was the weight of grief in my heart.

"Presently all this glory was erased, and the pall of night fell swiftly. But the moon being at the full, the way was plain. We had necessarily taken the usual route on our return, and suddenly, having come now to the heart of the desert, perceived in front of us, and a little off the track, a tall shape, white and glistening, rising up amidst some jâl trees. It was the cairn of white stones. The effect was weird and solemn to a degree. As we approached, the silence seemed to deepen upon us, while an indescribable perturbation took possession of me. With a simultaneous movement, Fleetwood and I uncovered. I question whether Sowerby noticed the monument, for he rode on in his dull way, his head depressed, his shoulders hunched about his ears. We went at a walking pace, the moonlight enveloping us and intensifying every shadow. The stillness around seemed as something palpable, the air being suffocatingly hot without a stirring breath or rustle, while the gentle monotonous fall of the horses' hoofs merely accentuated the silence.

"And then, quite suddenly and softly,

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into the midst of the death-like hush broke a sound—one so eerie and strange that my heart turned over at the hearing. Was it in the air? Was it behind, close to us, or in front? My horse stopped and pricked his ears; I felt a quiver run through his sensitive limbs. The horses of the others had stopped too. We heard it again. It was a burst of boyish laughter, a chuckle, a natural ripple of delicious mirth, distinctly heard, yet weirdly remote—the most disconcerting sound that ever struck on mortal ears. Sowerby sat absolutely motionless; Fleetwood drew in his breath with a shiver, and turned a ghastly face on me.

"'Ride on,' I whispered.

"I spoke with difficulty from a parched mouth and throat, and we set our horses in motion. My heart drummed in my ears as I rode, dreading lest I should hear the eerie sound again. Presently it came, a single soft peal of laughter that broke off, snapped off, as it seemed, with singular abruptness.

"We knew the laughter, the mirth of it—knew it as a familiar everyday thing that once had gladdened life for us, and now was shaking every nerve in our bodies.

"Then one of the horses—Fleetwood's, I think—gave a nervous start, and the sudden noise communicating a kind of panic to the others, they became uncontrollable and sprang forward in a wild gallop. The clatter of hoofs was not so great but that I could distinguish the peal of laughter, soft, remote, breaking about us until the edge of the desert was reached.

"That night, after I was in my bed, Fleetwood came to my tent and sat down uninvited. I said nothing to him, and on his part he did not speak. For half an hour I watched him sitting before me, his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands. At the end of that time he raised his face with a dazed look.

"'Fleetwood!' said I.

"With that he stepped to my bed and stooped over me.

"'To-night is not the first time I have heard it,' whispered he. 'There's a sergeant of ours—Molloy—has heard it too. As to the native soldiers, you couldn't drive them into the desert at the point of the bayonet. And the scare is gathering in the camp.'

"'That's bad,' I muttered.

"He stooped a little closer to my ear.

"'I've got a clue,' he whispered.

"'A clue! You think that it *is* Hossein Bukhs!'

"'Hush!' said he.

"And yet, though our energy in the inquiry redoubled, no result was clear enough to justify a single arrest. The authorities became impatient at our inability to bring to justice those who had been guilty of so heinous a crime, while within our own ranks a sullen discontent was growing. It was not easy to deal with our men. The sound of the laughter, the single mirth-filled peal, haunted us of the camp in our going out and coming in. The horrible thing was that that which had cheered every soul of us in the past had turned into a cause of nerve-racking terror. I have seen a native sentry shake as with an ague fit because, as he said, he had heard a whisper of that spectral mirth go by.

"'For the love of Heaven,' cried Sergeant Molloy to me one day, 'take us out of this, Captain!'

"He wiped the sweat from his brow as he spoke—the sweat of fear—and yet he was a big fellow, whose nerves I had supposed to be of iron.

"The sound of the laughter would come as abruptly as it invariably ceased, falling into the midst of our gravest business with eerie irrelevancy, and in forgetful moments, when the present, with its chequer of light and shade, so far obliterated memory as to bring back natural mirth, would break in with its ghostly ripple, and then, in its abrupt after-silence, leave us stricken.

"In the end the state of the camp became a main preoccupation and anxiety. The Major determined to distract attention by some organised amusement, and, with this in view, ordered down a band, which in due course arrived. Later, Fleetwood suggested a kind of *fête*—sports in the afternoon for the men, for ourselves a dinner, with Sowerby and anyone we could beat up from the nearer regions as guests. This proposal from Fleetwood surprised me. A look of black preoccupation had not left his face since the death of his friend. But the Major accepted the suggestion, and placed the entire preparations for the event in his hands; and that seemed to bring him a peculiar satisfaction.

"He proved himself well able to bear the charge. The programme included sports and feats of strength, for which prizes were to be given, Sowerby being appointed for that office. During mess the band would play until dessert, when the after-dinner speeches would begin. He even managed to conjure up a consignment of Chinese lanterns in good time. On a sudden the camp

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assumed an air of hectic excitement and gaiety.

"And then an odd thing happened. On the night before the festival, Fleetwood was missing. At this a thrill of apprehension ran through the camp, and not a man but was on the alert to notify his return should it occur. It was midnight before I got news of him, and then the entrance to my tent was lifted, and Fleetwood himself stood before me. I concealed my deep relief.

"'Fleetwood,' said I, 'this is very irregular.'

"'I know it,' he replied; 'I am prepared to take the penalty. I rode out to the desert as far as the cairn of white stones.'

"His voice broke as he spoke, and his eyes fell from mine. I looked at him uneasily, but could read nothing in his grim, downcast face. He moved towards the entrance, then looked back, and stepped towards me.

"'This time I heard *nothing*,' he whispered.

"The next day he was at his post, energetically directing everything. The afternoon went well, the sports were carried through successfully, and the band played between. Then Sowerby gave out the prizes, and made a cheery speech to the men. By this time the hour of sunset was approaching, and I managed to slip away, and went towards the mess-tent, where I found Fleetwood superintending the last arrangements. In his hand was a list of the guests, and an orderly was placing the name cards as he directed. I stood by idly, but presently fell to counting the seats, and, having done so once, did it again.

"'You've got a chair too many,' said I.

"Fleetwood's face, black enough to start with, darkened perceptibly, and he glanced at me with a scowl of impatience.

"'The number is correct,' said he.

"'I think not,' I returned.

"'It is correct,' he repeated, with a raised voice and a formidable look.

"Then I perceived that his manner was wild and that his hands trembled perceptibly. I eyed him steadily for a few seconds, and saw the sudden turbulence melting from his eyes. He threw back his head with a desperate sigh.

"'I beg your pardon, Captain. But—*don't* thwart me!' he whispered.

"The incident affected me. Fears as to Fleetwood's state of mind had preoccupied me ever since the murder of Bobby, and now these fears redoubled. My immediate business was to throw in my influence towards keeping everything straight for the evening. For that purpose, while watching the young officer, I determined to give all possible tether to his fancies. I left the tent, and when I again came towards it, the Chinese lanterns were lit all over the camp, the bandsmen were in their places, and the mess about to begin.

"The table had been constructed in the shape of a T, the cross being blunt and short. In the centre of the cross sat the Major, Sowerby being to his right. I was to occupy the foot immediately opposite the Major and Sowerby. Before seating myself, I glanced down the sides of the long table, now quickly filling up. And then, in a flash, I saw what had been Fleetwood's intention. His own seat—he already occupied it—was in the centre of one of the sides; immediately opposite was *an empty chair*. Over the chair, suspended from above, hung a wreath made from the leaves of the jâl tree; in the centre was a card bearing Mayson's name. The Major caught sight of it just as he sat down, and I saw him rise with a disturbed gesture, while he directed an inquiring glance my way. I replied by an almost imperative sign, and he reseated himself and kept silence; then the chaplain said grace, the band struck up, the dinner began.

"But no one spoke; not a man of us but had his thoughts fixed upon that solemn empty chair, save, perhaps, Sowerby, who was prevented from seeing the chair by an epergne which stood in his line of vision. Fleetwood sat forward, his head bent over the table, and his face white as the cloth.

"I did my best to set the ball of talk going amongst my near neighbours, and presently a thin murmur of voices arose and kept on a little to the accompaniment of the band and the clatter of knives and forks. But all the talk was desultory; it rose in gusts and fell as quickly. No one laughed—no one *dared* to laugh. Not a man of us could free himself from the impression of an unseen presence, or forget the white bowed face of the mourner opposite.

"At last the discomfiting feast was over, and, the dessert being on the table, the orderlies withdrew. The Major had recovered in some degree from the shock, and had talked incessantly to one or another of the gentlemen near, or to Sowerby, who, of all the table, alone remained unconscious. But the Major's face was grey and haggard, as we saw when, after the usual toast to Her Majesty, he rose and spoke a few words in honour of our chief guest, Assistant Commissioner Sowerby, whose health he asked us

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to drink. At this we all rose and made an effort to infuse something like good cheer into our responses. But at the moment I saw Fleetwood stand up and hold his glass towards the empty chair opposite, while he bent his head and white face reverently, as though the guest of honour were *there*. I hope it may be pardoned to my manhood that my own glass fell from my shaking hand and crashed.

"The incident caused a flutter of talk at my end of the table, from which we were diverted by a summons for 'Silence!' Sowerby being about to make his response. He stood with his face thrust forward and his eyes fixed, in the manner common to him, on one particular spot, and opened in a firm, cheerful voice.

"'Major Lascelles, officers and gentlemen, I need not tell you——' he began.

"At that point, raising his head to sweep a courteous glance over the assembled guests, he stopped abruptly. For the first time he had caught sight of the empty chair, and his eyes became riveted upon it. With an obvious effort he attempted to proceed.

"'I need not tell you——' he repeated.

"'Is it a trick, gentlemen?'"

"And paused again. Then he tore his eyes from the chair by a supreme exertion of will and once more essayed his speech. But in his face was a growing panic, and his voice was changed.

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"'I need not tell you that this occasion is a pleasant incident in my career——'

"Again he broke off. His eyes, as though drawn by a magnet, moved furtively, reluctantly, towards the chair, at which he began now to stare with a strange, absorbed fixity. And from round about the table came a low sigh, the breath from human hearts simultaneously affected by an unutterable foreboding and suspense. Upon that fell silence. The silence was broken—my ears will never lose the sound while I live—it was broken by a low, eerie laugh, fresh as from the heart of a child, and proceeding from the empty chair. The laughter was near to us and yet remote and spectral as the ghost of an echo might be, and it ceased with heart-shaking abruptness. Every man at the table heard the laughter, and every face was frozen into an aspect of fear half incredulous of itself. Afterwards, in the silence, even our breathing seemed suspended.

"Sowerby was bending now over the table, his hands resting upon it, his neck outstretched towards the empty chair. Sweats of anguish hung on his scarcely recognisable face, and presently we perceived a tremulous, voiceless movement of his lips, as though he addressed in speech someone who sat where every other man saw emptiness only.

"Then he turned his face without raising himself to an upright posture, and stole frightened glances about the table.

"'Is it a trick, gentlemen,' he began —'an unmannerly trick? Is he really there? Do you—do you see him, too? Did you hear him laugh? Gentlemen, I thought I had stopped that for ever! But he has gone on with his infernal laughter ever since——'

"All this he said in a curious, thin, shrill voice, and as without the faintest recognition of his position; but from round the board rose up a murmur of execration, a wordless groan of malediction from surcharged human hearts upon which the hideous truth for the first time flashed. The sound arrested him, reached his preoccupied brain. His eyes slowly, with a faltering, hesitating effort, roved from face to face; then a certain darkness smote upon them, he swayed, toppled over as though struck, and crashed down under the table. At the same moment I saw Fleetwood spring from his seat and, with a wild, improvised gesture of triumph, fling his arms above his head.

* * * * *

"You ask me for an explanation?

"Gentlemen, I am sorry for the fool's heart in us that, losing the sense of proportion in things, stumbles into crime. Sowerby, a petty magnate out of touch with European sanity, testy, overworked, jealous of his own dignity, and absorbed by that narrow idea, had created disaffection by his self-important meddling. He cunningly concealed his real sentiments when he accepted, with apparent cordiality, the assistance of the man best fitted to pull him out of his mess. But, in truth, the ease and blithe humour of the lad, the capacity and charm that delighted others, exasperated here. *He* was put in the wrong, as he thought, and his reputation derogated from. His morose and savage resentment deepened as Mayson's sane and sunny influence spread. In confession he admitted that jealousy had prevented him from allowing the young officer to proceed alone on his last important mission, and that the immediate cause of his crime—it is a trifle, gentlemen, that will push us over the brink—was the amused laugh with which Bobby greeted a story—imparted as they rode together through the desert—of how the wily Hossein Bukhs had once outwitted him. In a moment the secret seething hatred, the diseased and brooding vanity, rose up to maniacal fury; he struck out with his loaded whip, and the laughter on the lad's lips was silenced with horrifying abruptness.

"Fleetwood had observed that the phantom laughter was heard only when Sowerby was near at hand, and conceived that it might be neither more nor less than the effect of the appalling obsession of a guilty brain in its turn disturbing the sensitive, responsive human element around. That was the theory which had guided Fleetwood. I give it for what it is worth."

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THE LANGUAGE OF THE LINKS.

HUSBAND (in distance): How many are you, dear? I've taken my third.
WIFE (addressing her seventh): I'm three, too.
PLAYER (in rough on adjacent course): What an abominable lie!

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

TO A PARAGRAPHIC JOURNALIST.

(On the constant use of the heading, "A Stage Romance.")

Oh, journalist with facile pen,
Oh, most omniscient of men,
Oh, fluent paragraphic dasher,
How often have you cheered me when
I've toyed with omelettes at ten,
Or flirted with my morning rasher!

With what constructive skill have you,
With fat diurnal sales in view,
Put artfully each day before us
Drab commonplaces dressed anew,
And fictions which you swore were true,
Determined that you would not bore us!

Yet must I fain admit your pars,
Though broken up by pretty stars,
Not always pleasurably thrill me;
Your verbicidal habit jars,
Evoking mild anathemas,
Your adjectival orgies chill me.

However, you shall have your way,
To gather *clichés* while ye may;
But, in the trite hymeneal story,
Refrain, and leave romance, I pray—
That much maltreated word to-day,
Some measure of its pristine glory.

THE young uncle had one of his moods on, and didn't want to be worried with conversation.

"Oh, but we'll be *so good*," said Margaret; "we won't speak all the way." So the chauffeur speeded, with the little ones far in the back.

Ozone cleared the mood, and uncle looked back to say a bright word or two to the children.

"Where's Ethel?"

"Why," said Margaret, in a hushed voice, "she fell out a while back."

"And you didn't say anything?"

"But you know, Uncle Tom, you often have to do things you don't like when you ride in *other people's machines!*"

THE mother had been helping her small daughter with the arithmetic lesson for the next day, and, after struggling through the problems, secured what appeared to be satisfactory results. Next day, when the little girl returned from school, the mother asked with some curiosity—

"Were your sums all correct, dear?"

"No, mamma, they were every one wrong," replied the child.

"All wrong?" repeated the amazed mother. "Oh, I'm so sorry!"

"Well, mamma," said the little one consolingly, "you needn't worry. All the other little girls' mammas had them wrong, too."

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POLITE.

An incident in the life of Lord Beaconsfield affords an apt illustration of the charm which the spirit of chivalry infuses into everyday life, says the author of "How to be Happy Though Civil." Gladstone was attacking, in the House of Commons, the administration of Disraeli, as he was then. He had begun a sentence, "The right honourable gentleman and his satellites," when some interruption threw him out; he came to a stop, and seemed on the point of breaking down. Disraeli leaned across the table and repeated the word "satellites," whereupon his adversary at once recollected himself, and resumed his invective.

And Gladstone could be equally urbane. On a certain evening, after Lord Randolph Churchill had made a fiery attack on him, Lord Randolph and his wife were at the same dinner-party with Gladstone. "The first person," says Lady Randolph Churchill, "I met, as I went in, was Mr. Gladstone, who at once came up and said: 'I hope Lord Randolph is not too tired after his magnificent effort.'"

HOLIDAY PRECAUTIONS.

"Portah, ought I to change here?"

"Well, sir, if you don't want to be mobbed at the other end, it might be as well."

Two girls were talking over the telephone. Both were discussing what they should wear at the party. In the midst of this important conversation, a masculine voice interrupted, asking humbly for a number. One of the girls became indignant and scornfully asked—

"What line do you think you are on, anyhow?"

"Well," said the man, "I am not sure, but, judging from what I have heard, I should say I was on a clothes-line."

Some years ago, the late Mark Twain was a guest of honour at an opera box-party given by a prominent member of New York society, who was particularly talkative throughout the performance, to Mr. Clemens's increasing irritation.

Toward the end of the opera, she turned to him and said gushingly—

"Oh, my dear Mr. Clemens, I do so want you to be with us next Friday evening. I'm certain you will like it—the opera will be 'Tosca.'"

"Charmed, I'm sure," replied the famous humorist. "I've never heard you in that."

"Where's your luggage, Mike?" asked an employer of the new man-of-all-work upon his arrival.

"Lost, sur," said Mike.

"Lost? All your luggage?"

"Ivery bit of it, sur," replied Mike.

"But how did it happen?" asked the employer.

"The cork came out, sur," answered Mike.

Mother: If you're very good, Edith, I'll take you to the circus.

Little Girl: Do you really mean it, mother, or is it just a promise?

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"FOR EVER WILT THOU LOVE, AND SHE BE FAIR," BY GEORGE WETHERBEE, R.I.

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"LIGHT AND LAUGHTER IN THE KENTISH HOP-FIELDS." BY ROBERT FOWLER, R.I.
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THE PASTORAL IN MODERN LANDSCAPE.

BY AUSTIN CHESTER.

FROM the very beginning, from the first known drawing—that of a mammoth on a plaque of ivory, done by one of the cave men of Perigord—pictorial art has been a large factor in the pleasure of the world. To-day, when every town of any importance has its public art gallery, opening a vista down which an enlightened people can contemplate the beauty of life, we are inclined to think that the best function of such a gallery is its power to withdraw us from the turmoil of the world into the region of the ideal.

Recently we have devoted many of our pages to the reproduction of the contents of several of these galleries. We have shown very fully the pictures of the Chantrey, and have reproduced many of those in the Manchester Gallery and in the public collections of Oldham and of Preston; and as we lingered in consideration over their treasures, we could not but be struck with the fact that each gallery has a way of acquiring work of some special characteristic which differentiates it from other art collections. Thus we might almost suppose some particular enthusiasm to have guided the taste of each art gallery's purchasing committee, or, in the case of the great provincial galleries, that of generous donors or of those former collectors under whose last wills and testaments they have greatly benefited.

The Chantrey, for instance, which now numbers over one hundred and forty pictures, and is full of the more modern work done in the nineteenth century and onwards—as is in accordance with the terms of the Bequest—has a preponderance of those story-telling or quasi-historic subjects which we designate as *genre*. The Manchester collection is peculiarly rich in the work of the Pre-Raphaelite brethren, and the Preston is to

be congratulated on the possession of a large number of pastoral idylls.

So individual are galleries, so distinctive is the character of the contents of each, that in further contemplation of the many pictures in the Preston collection which lack of space prevented us from reproducing in our previous article, we seem to see this signature of specialisation writ peculiarly large. From this "proud" borough and the summit of its hill of commerce, crowded with urban signs of an ultra-prosperity, we look, by means of its art possessions, on to the slopes and flower-powdered, low-lying pastures of Arcady, and, as we do so, we see a non-existent period, and experience a sort of perturbed regret for what has never been.

"PASTORAL LANDSCAPE." BY J. M. W. TURNER, R.A.

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It would seem that at some time the artist was an inhabitant of that wonderful,

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"THE GRASSY HARVEST." BY ALFRED PARSONS, R.A.

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"THE WATER-PLASH." BY H. H. LA THANGUE, A.R.A.

From the original in the McCulloch Collection, reproduced by permission of Mrs. Coutts Michie

half-spiritualised country, the people of which were, for the most part, shepherds over whom Pan ruled, and that recollection of his time of delicious sojourn within its boundaries still clings to his memory. It was a country the hills of which "garnished their proud heights with stately trees," where there were "humble valleys, whose base estate seemed comforted with refreshing of silver rivers, meadows enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers, thickets which, being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so to by the cheerful deposition of so many well-tuned birds, each pasture stored with sheep feeding with sober security, while the pretty lambs, with bleating oratory, craved the dams' comfort; here a shepherd's boy piping as though he should never be old;

"THE FIRST FURROW." BY LUCY KEMP-WELCH.

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there a young shepherdess knitting, and withal singing, and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice's music." Such is the haunt of the pastoral artist's meditation.

"JEAN, JEANNE, AND JEANNETTE." BY THE LATE ELIZABETH STANHOPE FORBES.
From the original in the McCulloch Collection, reproduced by permission of Mrs. Coutts Michie.

Hither Turner retired when he painted the "Pastoral Landscape," which is one of the most important pictures of the Preston Gallery. It is a picture which justifies the praise Ruskin, some think extravagantly, showered upon a painter whose work he held as the ultimate and consummate flower of painting, whose dexterity has certainly never been surpassed—of whom his favouring critic wrote that he saw things "as Shelley and Keats did, and, with perfectly comprehensive power, gave all that such eyes can summon, to gild or veil the fatalities of material truth." Turner, Ruskin continues, gave not only truth, but

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"THE CAST SHOE." BY GEORGE H. MASON, A.R.A.

From the original in the National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, S.W.

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"ever so much of fairyland besides," producing work that was "bright as the jewel casements of Aladdin's palace, and soft as a kingfisher's wing." We can certainly say of this picture, as Ruskin said of certain of his drawings, "the foliage is rich and marvellous in composition, the rock and hill drawing insuperable, the sky exquisite in complex form." In this at its best. There also we see no less than nine pictures of John Linnell, three of which, "The Sandpits," "The Fallen Monarch of the Forest," and "Summer Evening: Boys Bathing. Harrow in the Distance," fall within the category of pastorals, for in them the artist essays no more than a pictorial and balanced suggestion of Nature, avoiding entirely that niggled brushwork which, as

"THE FLOWER GIRL." BY GEORGE HITCHCOCK.

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particular work Turner shows his genius. "Forms and colours melt into each other tenderly in his dream world, and his sense of gradation—here evidenced—was the most delicate ever possessed by man."

Of other older masters we find in the Preston Gallery, "Lancaster Sands," "The Way to the Hayfield," "Dudley Castle," and "Trefane Mountain," by David Cox, each revealing that rarely-endowed artist's work Henley points out, was so oddly at variance with "the vague of his ambitions" and the passionate idealism of his ideas.

Legends which have once been stored in the imagination of man pass from it, we know, with reluctance, although why the landscape-painter should have lingered in the regions under Ossa and Olympus so much more persistently than the figure-painter has done, we cannot say; yet certainly it

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"AN EPITOME OF HOLLAND." BY GEORGE HITCHCOCK.

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is in the field of landscape rather than in that of figure-painting that we have until quite recently looked for and found the pastoral quality. Perhaps the figure-painter who develops, and necessarily desires to portray, the object "as in itself it really is," has, by continual study of actuality, somewhat injured his imaginative vision. Now, however, as though to prove this argument fallacious, there has arisen in the realms of art the painter who conjoins landscape and figure work, and thus we get unity of idealism and realism.

Usually he paints small figures afar off in a somewhat large canvas, and presumably such figures lend themselves better to idealisation in the middle distance than do large ones near, for to-day the meadowsweet-fringed banks sloping to a stream, the tall, thinly-leaved graceful trees planted in some flowing space of undulating verdure, give the colour as of a Doric melody to the Amaryllises, the Daphnes, and the Chloes who there disport themselves to the enchantment of their swains. Here, too, we see Corydon and Thyrsis tending their

> Many-bleating flocks
> Of various cadence.

It was in words that the first pastorals were painted, and it would seem that something of the imaginative power of Virgil and of Theocritus has descended upon these children of the brush by means of the art of Agostino, Beccavi, Rémy Belleau, Torquato Tasso, Alvisio Pasqualigo, Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, Michael Drayton, Ben Jonson, and Christopher Marlowe. The spirit of the last-named writer is very distinctly shown by the many painters of to-day who, combining landscape with figures, show us life not "as in itself it really is," but through the glamour of the poet's verse—

> Come, live with me and be my love.

The work of Mr. George Wetherbee is essentially Doric in quality, since it shows simplicity both of sentiment and effect. He looks at Nature with Whistler's precept in his mind, "not with the enlarging lens, that he may gather facts for the botanist, but with the light of one who sees in her choice selection of brilliant tones and delicate, hints which suggest for his use exquisite harmony." For besides a certain convincing loyalty to truth, Mr. Wetherbee's work holds a kind of natural idealisation of the lowly, as though he wished to add to toil that beauty which to ordinary sight is absent. His picture in the Preston collection, "For Ever Wilt Thou Love, and She Be Fair," is an excellent

"BY THE LOCH SIDE." BY J. MACWHIRTER, R.A.

From an etching done by the Artist himself. Reproduced from the plate published by Messrs. Virtue & Co.

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"SHEEP FEEDING." BY JOSEPH FARQUHARSON, A.R.A.

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example of his style, but "The Praise of Spring," "The Wings of the Morning," "Jocund Day," "Dawn at the Gate," and "A Sleeping Shepherd"—to instance a few of his other works—each holds that elegantly idyllic, bucolic drama which we associate with the word "pastoral."

A stream of radiance pours down the fragrant aisles of hops in Mr. Robert Fowler's "Light and Laughter in the Kentish Hop-fields." The painter may label the scene of his labours Kent, but the picture was as if we knew them, engaged in their every-day, open-air tasks. That eminent critic made these remarks in reference to Mr. La Thangue's excellently representative picture, "Gathering Plums," which is in the Manchester City Art Gallery; but the one we reproduce from the original in the McCulloch Collection reveals that artist's keen love of the actual, while at the same time it shows that he does not always estimate rural life by a material standard. In "The Water-plash" he has succeeded in making the goose

"THE WAY TO THE HAYFIELD." BY DAVID COX.

Reproduced from the original in the Preston Corporation Art Gallery, by permission of the Art Committee.

undoubtedly executed in Arcadia. When amongst English workers did such joy in labour evidence itself? As we look close into the picture, Kent, with its prosaic inhabitants, fades, and we behold gardens of eternal spring and mysterious antiquity, where is re-illumined all that the dead, cold centuries of toil have made dull.

Mr. Ernest Phythian points out that land-scape with Mr. La Thangue is essential to his art, although it takes but a subordinate place—that he presents to us people to whom we are inclined to give quite simple names, poetical. He has linked thin lines of these ungenerously-considered fowls in a careful pictorial and skilful unity which is peculiarly attractive. The birds advance into the water of the foreground, enveloped in the lavender mystery which always accompanies white in shadow, and which the glint of distant golden sunshine turns into the colour of romance. It would be a remarkable picture were it only for the inimitable quality of its harmony, and for the ascertaining vision which saw that a charming sentiment could be derived from a flock of geese; but

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"SILENT EVE." BY CONRAD MÜLLER-KURZWELLY.

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the kind of philosophy of design and picturesqueness of the work are due to an instinctive recognition of what is paintable, and, although we acclaim the well-balanced composition as falling in with one of the many accepted laws which govern light and shade, there is no forced bringing together of these, but rather the seizing of the accidental moment which fulfils them.

The picture "The Grassy Harvest" is an excellent example of Mr. Alfred Parsons' English idylls, a sympathetic rendering of a scene such as we all love—broad, stretching meadowland, part of which has fallen under what flat prospect. Colour, tone, and that peculiar clearness of atmospheric effect to which Mr. Parsons so invariably attains, are here shown at their best. Elegant in line, this picture holds that quality of completeness which reveals the truest artistry, and yet shows its painter to be enamoured of Nature at her simplest and in her least provocative mood.

"Jean, Jeanne, and Jeannette," by the late Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, is large in the distinctly wistful quality which pertained to all the work done by that charming artist. It is a vision of dreamland, in which

"SUMMER EVENING: BOYS BATHING. HARROW IN THE DISTANCE." BY JOHN LINNELL.

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the persuasion of the scythe, whilst the near foreground is dotted with the flowers which Mr. Parsons paints with such perfection—in this case fritillaries, the title of the picture being taken from Matthew Arnold's lines—

> I know what white, what purple fritillaries
> The grassy harvest of the river fields
> Above by Ensham, down by Sandford yields.

The allusion is, of course, to the special abundance of these flowers in the riverside meadows above and below Oxford. Clumps of trees show their intricate mystery against the tender sky, and figures in the middle distance relieve the monotony of a some-

a dream-girl dreams; a pathos of idealism marks the youthfulness of her face under the quaint cap outlining the round young head. Hers is an elusive figure against the soft, grey-green grass, which has that undulation which speaks of an answering obedience to the whispered commands of a soft wind. A shaft of chastened sunlight penetrates to the stream from which Jean is hoping, as fruit of his loved toil, to secure a meagre supper. The whole picture is an idyll—light, shadowy, restful.

"The First Furrow," by Miss Lucy Kemp-Welch, is concerned with portrayal of that dignity which lives in labour; yet this

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"CHANGING PASTURES." BY ALEXANDER YOUNG.

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picture of ploughing, like all pictures of the same subject, is suggestive of the early period which we have traced as influencing, if unconsciously, each artist whose work we here reproduce. Our Phæthon has no fiery steeds to guide, nor incapacity to guide them, but the attitude the ploughman necessarily assumes, the lines of the skeleton chariot from behind which he urges his willing horses, have much in common with our motive theme. Possibly Fred Walker's picture is the more classical, but the one by Miss Kemp-Welch is replete with that quality of effort without which not even ploughing is accomplished.

"The Cast Shoe," by George Heming Mason, is less pastoral, perhaps, than idyllic. The picture shows a common enough episode —a rustic lad carrying a horse's shoe and leading a white horse over a rugged path— and it is to its virtue of tone that it owes its great charm. It is painted in that suggestive hour of approaching night when outlines are yet distinct, although details are reduced to a chastened, spiritualised whole. Seen then, the most trivial occupations of rural life strike the observer not so much as Nature as romantic art. Some such episode as is here depicted Mason must have seen during the ebbing moments of light, when the surprising clarity which is the peculiar accompaniment of the after-glow is as yet unexchanged for the tones of night, and, by aid of his sensitive art, he incorporated his vision in paint.

"Sheep Feeding," by Joseph Farquharson, shows us, towards the end of some long, cool, brilliant day in early autumn,

> The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,

and the fleecy, pearl-grey shadowed flock, painted with that loyalty to subject to which Mr. Farquharson invariably attains. It is an entirely charming scene, typically pastoral.

With Mr. George Hitchcock's "In the Tulip Field," a picture which has found its place in the Dresden Gallery, we have a perfect riot of colour, which takes us in imagination to low-lying lands and inter-threading canals, a land of fitful sunshine and humid, chastening airs, of spacious skies and rain-laden clouds. With scrupulous fidelity and a conscientiousness most suited to the country he depicts, Mr. Hitchcock in this picture reveals the sweetness which never fails to lie under the rigidity of toil. Delicately toned, perfectly considered is the aerial perspective of the receding plains which the sumptuous tulips occupy; this wonderful field, ablaze in colour, reveals the high technical qualities of the painter's work. Some impress of the care tulip culture requires is decipherable on the face of the girl who stands within the flowers' dividing rows, yet it makes way for realisation of the abstract essence of beauty, so definite is the alliance between the beautiful girl and the beautiful flowers.

If we have sought to show that Nature is improved when seen through the prism of pastoral art, "an art which doth mend Nature," we are not unmindful of the words Shakespeare puts into Polixenes' mouth, to the effect that—

> Nature is made better by no mean,
> But Nature makes that mean, so over that Art
> Which you say adds to Nature, is an Art
> That Nature makes.

Now and again, in such a picture as "By the Loch Side," the late John MacWhirter's pictures show a conscious seeking for the pastoral quality—not often, however. Granite hills and the sensitive cloud mountain lines in flight over the rugged Scottish country, or the deep blue immensity which domes the grandiose Italian Alps, even the truly representative elegance of the birch trees of which he was so fond—these subjects have little in common with rural ease and its natural charm.

Mr. Conrad Müller-Kurzwelly's work is peculiarly full of the quality the title of which our article indicates. While the actual scenes are painted with a realism which, from a technical standard, is interesting, the artist's mind has obviously been moved by the sentiment which underlay the hour indicated in such a picture as "Silent Eve." For some painters the call of sentiment is so urgent and alluring that they present their temperament in their work. Especially must this be the case with Mr. Müller-Kurzwelly, for the poetic quality —the pastoral feeling—is distinguishable in all he does, so completely does he eliminate the commonplace.

In the art of our own day, Mr. Lamorna Birch, Mr. George Clausen, Sir Alfred East, Mr. Arnesby Brown, Sir Ernest Waterlow, and Mr. Adrian Stokes, are amongst those who directly point the way to Arcady.

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THE OBSTACLE.

By ROBERT BARR.

THE city of Beversham, in Ontario, is proud of its location, its beauty, and its enterprise. It owns several millionaires, or is owned by them, all depending on the way you regard the relationship. In any case, a dozen of them are in full possession of Beversham Bank, a most flourishing financial institution, which has just acquired the right to issue its own bank-notes.

The pride of Beversham is its west end park, and the pride of that park is its section of the primeval forest, aptly named "The Backwoods," containing in its depths a rest-house in the form of a log cabin, a copy of those built by the old settlers. The Backwoods, even on a Saturday afternoon, is solitary as the inner reaches of Fontainebleau —an excellent place for meditation. To this use it was being put by Rutherford Neilson, who walked slowly along under the shadow of the great trees, hands clasped behind him and head bent. He was an excellent example of young Canadian manhood, his frame stalwart and well-proportioned, his face smooth and clear-cut, genial, good-natured, yet with a touch of steadfast resolution about it. Physically he was in the Backwoods, mentally he was far away in the forest of futurity. Thus he did not hear approaching footsteps; even the cheery call "Good afternoon!" did not rouse him. Next instant he was jerked into a world of reality. The oncomer sprang at him from behind and grasped his arms with a grip of iron, holding him pinioned and helpless.

"I said 'Good afternoon!'" roared his captor. "Respond politely, or I'll fling you into the forest!"

"Good afternoon," replied Neilson, endeavouring to turn upon the other, who nevertheless kept out of sight.

"That's better, and is some slight acknowledgment of my exertions. For the last two hours I have been searching for you."

"Well, you've got me, and if you wish to give me a lesson in courtesy, you should practise what you preach."

The other laughed and released him. Looking round, Neilson was amazed to recognise John W. Morrow, manager of Beversham Bank, and his own chief, for Neilson was cashier of that institution.

"What's wrong?" he asked, his thoughts turning at once to the bank.

"Nothing wrong," replied Morrow. "Why do you jump at such a conclusion? Not the case of a guilty conscience, I hope? You look a little uneasy."

"Naturally, when a man is sprung on from behind in a lonely spot like this. My conscience is all right."

"Glad to hear it. Well, Neilson, I'm going to startle you more than I did just now. I'm no longer manager of the bank. I sent in my resignation yesterday while the directors were in session, and it was accepted with a promptness very far from flattering."

"You've resigned?" cried Neilson in astonishment. "In Heaven's name, why?"

"You've been less observant than I supposed if you need ask that question. I resigned because of the Obstacle."

"The Obstacle? What is the Obstacle?"

"You should rather say 'Who.'"

"Do you mean Russell Simpkins?"

"Precisely."

"But Simpkins is no obstacle to you. Indeed, he is under your orders. *I* might consider Simpkins an obstacle, but you have nothing to fear."

"Don't make the mistake of thinking I fear him, Neilson. It would be more accurate to say I despise him. However, let us get into the log house. I want to sit down."

The ex-manager led the way to the rest-house. It was furnished like a pioneer dwelling, with a huge fireplace at one end, built of clay reinforced by sticks and twigs, in which rested a half-burnt back log. The chairs were home-made and splint-bottomed, stout and comfortable. Morrow sat down in one, tilting it back against the log wall, resting his heels on its stout rung. He smiled as he noticed that Neilson took a bench allowing him to watch the forest road

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through the open door, then he smoothed away the smile before Neilson could notice it, and his customary sternness returned.

"When I told you that I had resigned my position, it seemed to astonish you, because I held the most coveted position in the bank. Possibly all faith in my good judgment will vanish when I add that I have accepted a less responsible situation, although I get the same salary, in Calgary, for which place I leave on Monday."

"What?" cried Neilson, turning his face momentarily from the road. "Surely you are never thinking of going so far west?"

"North-west, my son. Please let us have accuracy, which should be the characteristic of every business man. As for distance, it is merely sixteen hundred and fifty-two miles, seven furlongs, nine feet ten inches from the spot where I am sitting."

Neilson laughed.

"I thought Calgary was simply a sort of land office settlement. Is any bank business done there?"

"My ignorant young friend, the bank clearances of Calgary for the last financial year approached two hundred million dollars. There is the land of opportunity! Where does Beversham stand in the face of such figures? In becoming manager here, I had not reached the height of my ambition. I realised that I was at the end of a blind alley, and, from the moment of my appointment, I began preparations for leaving."

"I thought you said it was on account of the Obstacle?"

"Yes, he forms the end of the blind alley, if I may put it that way. I had either to smash him or go elsewhere; but although I might smash him, I could not overcome his uncle, the president of the bank, who owns fifty-one shares of the bank stock, and is therefore master of the situation. I came to the conclusion that the energy necessary to overcome the Obstacle might be better expended in furthering my own interests in another field."

"Isn't there always an obstacle?" asked the younger man.

"Oh, I suppose so, of one kind or another, but I wish to get into a line of activity where honest hard work is the road to promotion. I'm tired of nepotism. And now I will come down to the personal matter. When I gave in my resignation, I recommended you as my successor. I feel certain that the majority of the board would have accepted that recommendation; but they are dominated by the president, and although he is too shrewd a man to force his will upon them, the directors know that any contest is useless while he holds ultimate power. So all Mr. Russell had to say was that, although he deeply regretted my departure, and would have given my recommendation due consideration if it had been made some time previously, he had suspected that I was dissatisfied with my position, and had resolved that the next manager should be one financially interested in the bank. In the course of Nature, he said pathetically, his nephew, who is also his heir, would take his place. It would be to the interest of Mr. Russell Simpkins, more than to any other, that the bank should continue prosperous; therefore, if the directors agreed with him, that young man was the logical successor of the manager whose resignation they all deplored. Of course, the directors did agree with him, so the estimable Russell Simpkins is now manager of the bank."

"I don't know how to thank you, Mr. Morrow, for the kindness you have shown, and the compliment you paid me in making the recommendation you did."

"I am not so sure it was a kindness, after all. Coming down King Street last night, I saw Simpkins emerge from McCarthy's saloon. He had evidently been celebrating his promotion, and was in triumphant mood, consequently injudicious in his talk.

"'We are rid of you at last,' he cried, 'and that's one sneak disposed of! You tried to put Neilson in your place, but you got left, and he'll be the next man to go. I'll bet you a fiver he's outside the bank in a month.'

"So, you see, my departure has not only left the Obstacle in power, but my attempt to promote you has made him vindictive."

"Oh, that doesn't matter—he was never a friend of mine."

"It does matter—it matters very much. It means that your career in Beversham is at an end. You see, merit doesn't count in a place like the Beversham Bank. Even if all the directors except the president were your friends, they could not save you. The new manager will trump up some kind of a case against you, report to the president, and you will be dismissed. Now, listen to my proposition. Resign, as I have done, and come with me to Calgary. I have been asked to bring with me a capable young man as one of my assistants. The salary will be more than you are getting here, and your prospects will be as wide as the prairies themselves."

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Neilson's eyes gleamed at the opportunity held out to him, but his firmly-closed lips seemed somehow to contradict the acquiescence of the eyes. He sprang to his feet, holding out his hand.

"Mr. Morrow," he cried, "you are a splendid friend, and I am proud to claim you as mine."

"You will come?" said the ex-manager eagerly.

"No, I will fight."

The two men stood with clasped hands, a light of courage, even of defiance, in the eyes of the younger, an expression of pity in those of the elder, as of one who sees a fighter go forth to lead a forlorn hope. Then the stillness was thrilled, rather than disturbed or broken, by a scarcely perceptible humming sound, like the purr of a very gentle kitten. The effect on Neilson was magical. An expression of delight banished the sternness from his face.

"Excuse me, Mr. Morrow," he said, hurriedly withdrawing his hand, "I have an appointment. I'll call round on you to-night and explain." And, with that, he bolted through the open door. The astonished Morrow took a few steps forward and looked out. He saw approaching along the road a two-seated automobile of the latest and most dainty fashion, driven by a very beautiful girl, whom he recognised at once as Stella Ainsley, only daughter of George Ainsley, the second most important director of Beversham Bank. The girl was smiling, and slowing down the machine, that she drove so well, as Rutherford Neilson dashed alongside and sprang into the car. So eager was he that the machine had not been brought to a standstill, and thus without a pause it sped along the road and into the forest depths.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" cried Morrow. "No wonder I couldn't hold his attention, if that is what he was waiting for! A surreptitious meeting! That shows the old man, with all his fear of fortune-hunters, knows nothing of it! 'I'll fight,' says Neilson, and small blame to him. He has something worth fighting for. Yes, and, by Jove, if George Ainsley ever comes to a financial struggle with Stanley Russell, he will need Neilson by his side as much as Neilson needs the girl. Good luck to the boy, say I!"

For some time everything went smoothly at the bank. The new manager took up his duties with that quiet dignity which becomes the position of so important an official. He showed no animosity towards the underling whom, in his cups, he had threatened to discharge. Nevertheless, Neilson was never for a moment off his guard. His attitude towards the chief was always deferential. He paid strict attention to business, and obeyed orders with alacrity and accuracy.

About a month after the departure of Morrow, a special messenger brought to the president a packet containing newly-engraved and printed bank-notes of various denominations to the amount of a hundred thousand dollars, needing only the signatures of president and manager to become currency. These issues are rarely termed bank-notes in Canada. They are five-dollar bills, or ten-dollar bills, or fifty-dollar bills, as the case may be. The contents of the package were duly signed by the president, a long and tiresome job, but carried out by the old man with the conscientious determination he brought even to the most tedious details of his business. Then the bundle was handed over to Russell Simpkins.

The following afternoon Neilson was summoned to the manager's room. Russell Simpkins was seated in his swivel chair, and on the desk before him lay the packet of bank-notes.

"You are a quick writer," said the chief genially. "There's my signature on that sheet of paper. Just take a pen and show me how exactly and speedily you can imitate it."

Rutherford took the manager's pen and dashed off the name "Russell Simpkins."

"Excellent—excellent!" said the owner of that name. "The president is old-fashioned, and acts on the adage that if you want a thing done well, do it yourself. I belong to the modern school of business, and if I wish anything done, I get some other fellow to do it. This is a laborious job, but I want it accomplished as quickly as possible. Just place your assistant at the cashier's window, take this package into the board room, where you won't be disturbed, and sign these bills in my stead."

Rutherford's cue was to obey orders, but, on receiving this command, he stood indecisive, using the interval to tear up the sheet of paper he had just signed, putting the fragments into his pocket. The manager smiled at this sign of caution.

"Would my use of your name on the bills be legal?" said Neilson at last.

"Why, certainly," replied the manager jauntily. "So far as that goes, a rubber

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stamp would do. It's a mere matter of formality."

"Nevertheless, Mr. Simpkins, I should like to hold your written authorisation."

Russell Simpkins pressed an electric button, and when his secretary entered, said—

"Just type out, in whatever is the legal formula, a permit enabling Mr. Neilson to write my signature on our new bank bills up to the amount of a hundred thousand dollars." And as they waited for this document, Simpkins remarked, in the most friendly manner—

"You seem rather given to red tape, Mr. Neilson. Still, that is a commendable quality. You see, these bills will pass through your hands both coming and going, and I thought you'd the more surely recognise the manager's signature when written by yourself than if my secretary had made the inscription, as was my first idea."

The cashier bowed, but made no comment. The secretary came in with the typewritten sheet, which Simpkins glanced at and signed.

"There," he said, "is your authorisation, and my signature will serve you as a model."

Neilson, receiving the document, took up the packet and departed. Arriving in the large board room, with its long table, he locked himself in and opened the package. The bills were neatly arranged in separate bunches according to their denomination, from five dollars up to a hundred. The young man stood regarding them for a moment, then picked up the typewritten sheet, and once again read it carefully, muttering to himself—

"If there is any trap here, I swear I can't find it. This seems all on the level. I'm obeying not merely orders, but written orders."

After all, he thought to himself, what right had he to be so suspicious? Might not Simpkins's threat of dismissal have been merely an unthinking expression uttered in a moment of exhilaration? The new manager had certainly gone straight enough since he succeeded to Morrow's place. Neilson banished his doubts, flung his office coat on a chair, and settled down to work. He knew at a glance how many bills each packet should contain, and, resolving to begin on the smaller denominations, piled the bundles methodically on the table before him. The moment his sensitive hand lifted the first pile of tens, he realised the weight was short, and so with the succeeding bundles of tens and fives. He did not need to count the bills; he had handled too many of them in his day.

"Ten thousand dollars missing," he said. Locking the board room door behind him, he marched straight to the manager's room. It was empty.

"Mr. Simpkins left just after you did, sir," said the secretary. "He won't be back again this afternoon. Anything I can do for you?"

"No, thank you."

Once more locked in the board room, the young man sat down to think. A sudden chill unnerved him. He had been expecting a trap that would ensure his dismissal, but now he saw before him the grim gates of Kingston Penitentiary. He had accepted the packet from the manager in the presence of the secretary. The president could truthfully affirm that he had given this packet to his nephew, and apparently intact it had passed to himself. It would be his word unsupported against that of three men, two of them the highest officials of the bank, whose good faith was unimpeachable. The very conclusiveness of the case against him braced his nerves, and he mapped out his course.

"After all," he said to himself, "money may be traced, and before the stolen ten thousand can be of any use to Simpkins, he will be compelled to sign each bill." The first necessity, then, was to differentiate between the ninety thousand dollars in his possession and the ten thousand in the manager's grip. He took up a pen and began his work sternly and rapidly. On each note he wrote his own signature, "Rutherford Neilson."

In using his own name, he counted on the carelessness of the manager in neglecting to examine the bills. If he discovered the substitution, Simpkins must either ignore it, or forego the use of the stolen ten thousand. Indeed, the manager had another problem to face that would tax all his dexterity. He must engineer the ninety thousand dollars into the treasury of the bank as a hundred thousand dollars.

When, two days later, Neilson handed the packet, tied up exactly as he had received it, to the manager, the latter merely said, "Thank you," and the cashier went back to his post to await the explosion. Days passed, and nothing happened. The currency had been successfully placed in the treasury, and was now passing through the cashier's own hands from the custody of the bank. But Neilson was under no delusion regarding

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own immunity. He set a Toronto detective work, and acquired important information, on the day when the bank messenger came him, saying the directors wished to see him their room, he called his assistant, braced back shoulders, and obeyed the summons.

"Now comes the fight!" he said to himself, ultant in the fact that it was less his n liberty he meant to secure than the nfidence of old George Ainsley, father the girl to whom he was secretly trothed.

All the directors were in their aces, and Stanley Russell sat at e head of the table, with angry, wering face, a bank-note in his nd. At first Neilson thought ussell Simpkins, now standing side his uncle, had lighted

"'I ask that those shares be now produced and placed on this table.'"

the fuse, but a look of bewilderment on the manager's face hinted that the crisis was more of a surprise to him than it was to Neilson. The president spoke—

"Is this your signature, Mr. Neilson?"

"Yes, sir."

"You know, perhaps, that our late manager suggested you as his successor?"

"I do, sir."

"And you were disappointed with the result?"

"I was, sir."

"Are all the bills in our treasury thus signed by you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were you so foolish as to imagine that, by a trick like this, you could overcome a

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decision arrived at by the directors, and force them to accept you as manager?"

"No, sir."

The president's face relaxed a little, and he leaned back in his chair.

"I thought you expected to push us into a corner, as a large proportion of our currency has gone out bearing your name as manager."

"That is a matter for your further consideration, sir. Of course, some explanation must be made to the bank inspector on his next round."

The president sat up. His frown returned.

"Then you do hope to bring pressure on us?"

"The pressure is here already, sir, although apparently you have no one in the bank alert enough to acquaint you with the situation. I am content to act as manager, but only at the unanimous request of the board."

"Well, of all the effrontery I ever met, this beats anything in my recollection!"

It was George Ainsley who spoke, his face red with indignation. Neilson turned to him with a smile, the first that had moved his lips since he entered the room.

"Do you realise, sir, that you are not in the witness-box, but in the criminal's dock, if I may put it so harshly? What you have done may not be forgery——"

"A man cannot forge his own name, sir."

"It is a misdemeanour of some sort," continued Ainsley, his anger rising, "against the law—I am sure of it."

"The law, Mr. Ainsley, is more considerate than you are. It allows a man to take human life in self-defence. My signatures to-day stand between me and Kingston Penitentiary."

Ainsley stared at him speechless. The young man whirled round and confronted the manager.

"Russell Simpkins," he cried, "what did you do with the ten thousand dollars you stole from this bank on the twenty-fifth of last month?"

"You brazen liar!" roared Simpkins, starting forward as if to throttle his defamer. The firm grasp of his uncle's hand on his arm checked him. To the startled gaze of the onlookers, this hand simply restrained the infuriated man from committing an assault. But it did much more than that; its electric grip said to Simpkins—

"Keep quiet, you criminal fool, and give me a chance to save you from prison!"

Simpkins had spoken with contempt of his uncle as old-fashioned, but here was shown that alertness of mind, that instant reading of character, that quick decision, that correct sizing up of a situation, that unscrupulousness, which had made Stanley Russell the richest man in Beversham. He did not even glance at his nephew, searching for traces of guilt. He knew instinctively that Simpkins had stolen the money, by the determined sternness of Neilson's face and his tense but even speech. He knew also that his nephew's blustering and swagger would be of no avail against the quiet confidence of his opponent, who doubtless had proofs ready to support his charge. The president's keen intelligence instantly and accurately arrived at the method by which the trick had been done.

"I'll break his cursed neck!" bellowed Simpkins.

"You'll break nothing," said his uncle, "not even the peace. Take example from your subordinate, and control yourself."

The nephew subsided under the command of his uncle. A sinister smile was on the old financier's lips as he turned to his young *employé*.

"Mr. Neilson, I desire, before the board, to compliment you on your clear-headed devotion to business, and your faithfulness in service to the bank. I regret now that I did not accept the advice of our late manager, and appoint you to succeed him."

Neilson stood dumbfounded at this unexpected eulogy, this complete change of front, and for a moment fear surged up within him that, despite the trump cards he held, he was about to lose the game, out-manœuvered. The directors, no less astonished, looked on in bewildered silence.

"Gentlemen," said the president, turning to them, "I must apologise for a scene without precedent in our councils, but you will excuse my nephew for his natural outburst when a charge so serious is thus unexpectedly hurled at him. The explanation is of the simplest. The fault is entirely my own. I am accused by those unfriendly to me of being a wily financier, and in this case I have been too wily. I see now that I should have taken one of you into my confidence, but I have always played a lone hand, and did so on this occasion. I overruled our late manager's recommendation of Mr. Neilson. I knew our cashier to be a capable subordinate, but I doubted whether he was big enough for the managership. My nephew was also an untried man. In your interests and mine, I resolved upon a

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test. Could ten thousand dollars be extracted from the bank without the knowledge of the staff? If it could, then my nephew was the wrong man for the place, and several of his subordinates must be discharged also. Mr. Neilson, it now appears, discovered the discrepancy at once, and he dealt with the crisis in a manner which arouses my keenest admiration. However, he made two mistakes, the first of which explains the second. The first was in believing a trap that might endanger his liberty was laid for him; the second in thinking that the currency was handled only by two persons, the manager and himself. He came to the conclusion that the manager had taken the money, overlooking the fact that the currency had first passed through my hands. I was the man who took the money, or, rather, who withheld it. I expected that whoever realised money was missing would come to me. In such case, that man would at once have been made manager of this bank. I am disappointed that my nephew did not discover the apparent defalcation, the more so because I gave him what I fear was unfair advantage. I bestowed upon him the ten thousand dollars, to be signed by himself, telling him that this amount was given to celebrate his accession to the managership. I was anxious to know how he proposed to invest it, and here my wiliness was rewarded. He answered, as I hoped, that he wished to invest in the stock of this bank. Now, gentlemen, you understand the situation. Whatever I possess goes to my nephew, and his answer pleased me very much. There is no stock of this bank for sale, but I transferred to him from my own holding ten thousand dollars' worth of shares. It is with regret that I add he has yet much to learn regarding banking business. I therefore propose that he be replaced by Mr. Neilson, whom I congratulate on the promotion to which he is invited, I am sure, by the unanimous consent of the directors, as he stipulated."

There was an outburst of applause from his fellow-directors, and his nomination was instantly made unanimous. The president, his face perceptibly whiter than when he began his oration, could not deny himself one malignant glance at Neilson, then he leaned back in his chair and drew a handkerchief across his moistened brow. The directors also were looking at Neilson, as though expecting some recognition of the handsome treatment accorded him. The young man spoke very quietly—

"This matter is now perfectly clear. Ten thousand dollars have been taken from the bank, and with that amount a certain number of shares purchased. The irregularity of that deal is apparently condoned by the board. This is most amicable on the part of everybody. I now desire to see the deal completed. The bank has become possessed of ten thousand dollars' worth of its own shares. Very good. I ask that those shares be now produced and placed on this table, made over formally to the custody of the bank."

"What's that?" cried the president, all alert once more. Then, pulling himself together: "Oh, yes, yes, certainly. I shall complete the deal, as you suggest, by giving you at once my personal cheque for ten thousand dollars."

"No," said Neilson, "the shares, or nothing."

This was more than the president could bear.

"What right have you," he cried, "to dictate to this board—a board that but a moment ago treated you with such generosity?"

"To rule out generosity, or friendship, or family ties, or any other consideration but that of strict business, I inform the gentlemen of the board that I will not accept the managership. The shares must be placed on the table."

"Must?" cried the president, rising to his feet.

"Yes, sir. According to your own statement, those shares are the property of the bank, the directors having confirmed the transaction regarding them."

The president cast one swift glance round the table, but saw at once he was without support. Not a man there but knew the importance of acquiring those shares. Their possession would release the directors from the iron control that Stanley Russell had used relentlessly for so many years. A fierce anger dominated the badgered president. It is hard for a despot to dethrone himself at the command of one he had despised.

"I refuse!" he cried, his hands trembling. "You are discharged! Leave the room!"

"Certainly," replied Neilson, "but I go from here direct to the police-station, and public investigation will show how accurate was your eloquent discourse."

As the young man turned, George Ainsley sprang to his feet.

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"Stop!" he cried. Neilson obeyed at once.

"Mr. President," said Ainsley, "produce those shares. I don't want to see anyone go to prison."

Stanley Russell realised that he was beaten.

"Very well," he replied meekly. "Excuse me for a moment, gentlemen; the shares are in my private room." And with that he disappeared.

"Young man," said Ainsley, still standing, "do you persist in your refusal of the managership?"

"Yes," said Neilson; "I am going west, to Calgary."

"No, you're not," contradicted George Ainsley, smiling. "I offer you double the manager's salary to take charge of my own financial affairs."

"I accept gladly," said Neilson, "if you agree to a proviso which I shall propose in private." And the two men shook hands across the table.

LOVE'S TRANQUILLITY.

DEAREST, our love is not of dark or bright,
Or verses murmured in midnight;
Nor hath it aid from starlight or the moon,
Or music's long and splendid swoon.
Not time nor distance over it hath power,
No, nor the dead and wingless hour,
Though simple and of every day it seem,
It holds the quality of dream.
Oh, it is proof against delay and death,
And hath a tranquil morning breath;
Is fragrant as the wild and wayside rose
That over grass and hedgerow blows.
It hath a very real life in the sun,
Scathless and dateless shall it run;
Do others call it cold and without life,
Since in it is no kind of strife?
Ah, no, its peace is kindled from white flame,
And from the core of fire it came.

STEPHEN PHILLIPS.

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THE STRATEGY OF MR. WORPINGHAM.

BY JOHN BARNETT,

Author of "Eve in Earnest," "A Queen of Castaways," etc.

SUDDENLY, without the least warning, a voice—a woman's voice—exclaimed: "I detest violent language, but in another minute I shall say 'Dash!'—I shall certainly say 'Dash!'"

Charles Indigo Worpingham heard those surprising words from behind a low sandhill. For some ten maddening minutes he had been engaged in searching for his golf ball. He was a man of forty-two, and the fine outline of his figure had become just a trifle blurred, but, as shall be proved, his heart still had boundless capacities for romantic and even adventurous passion.

He was playing a lonely round upon the egregious and crime-tempting golf course of a certain tiny Northumbrian island. And the romance of his life will always be associated with the second hole of that course, which was like none other of Mr. Worpingham's acquaintance. After sundry amazing adventures upon precipitous slopes, he had found himself required to brassy wildly across a chaotic, fantastic desert of bush and sand and bents. Mr. Worpingham, being by that time beyond surprise, accordingly did so, trudged in the direction his ball had taken, and began the apparently hopeless task of finding the missile in that wilderness. And some ten minutes later, as has been said, he chanced upon romance.

When he heard the voice, Mr. Worpingham, who, as it happened, had already made use of the threatened monosyllable several times, passed round the sandhill and sighted the speaker.

She was a slim lady, of somewhere between thirty and forty, with a humorous, vivacious face. She carried a bag of golf clubs upon her shoulder, and—"Have you seen a golf ball, by any chance?" she exclaimed at first sight of Mr. Worpingham.

That gentleman removed his cap politely.

"I have not done so," he answered gravely. "Indeed, I was about to put the same question to you."

The lady seemed pleased.

"So you've lost one, too," she remarked. "Oh, what a course—what a course this is!"

"It certainly provides a variety of golf," agreed Mr. Worpingham—"at any rate, so far as my experience of it has gone."

He spoke slowly, with just a touch of pomposity, as was his harmless custom. The lady shrugged her shoulders expressively, as though to indicate that he had indulged in an understatement of the facts.

"It might even," resumed Mr. Worpingham, "tempt a weak nature to give way to blasphemy."

The lady showed her teeth in a smile.

"So you heard what I said to myself just now?" she commented. "I was afraid that you must have done so. Well, *your* nature must be even weaker than mine, for, if I am not mistaken, I heard someone actually using the word 'Dash' a minute or so ago!"

Mr. Worpingham's expressive and heated countenance revealed his shame.

"I am indeed grieved that you should have heard me," he said. "Had I guessed that a lady was within earshot——"

"It didn't matter," the lady hastened to assure him. "Indeed, it rather relieved my own tortured feelings, and I am certain that you have had sufficient provocation. Are you playing alone, too?"

"I am," Mr. Worpingham answered. "May I—would you care to finish the round with me?"

"Delighted, I'm sure. I detest playing alone. But it's only fair to tell you that I'm not a great player."

"My own handicap," responded Mr. Worpingham pregnantly, "is twenty-one." Then his natural male vanity asserted itself. "But with steady practice I have no doubt that it could be lowered," he added hastily.

The lady nodded her head understandingly.

"I will play you the remaining holes level for a sixpence," she challenged brightly. "I have a feeling that we shall be well matched."

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And it turned out that she was right. A desperate struggle was fought out among the heather and the wastes of sandy turf, viewed by myriads of apparently amused and interested rabbits. Each hole provided fresh and intricate problems, and entailed at least one exhaustive search for balls. Meanwhile, the two combatants were swiftly making strides in friendship. It appeared that the strange lady's name was Miss Herminia Garrick. Fate and her own desire for quiet and peace had despatched her to the island for a lengthy holiday, it seemed.

"But it is almost *too* quiet," she complained whimsically. "There is literally no one to speak to, and I *do* like occasionally to hear the sound of my own voice and even someone else's."

This, there can be no doubt, was another understatement. Speech, constant speech, was to Miss Garrick a physical necessity. She talked pleasantly, without a break, whilst they searched for balls, whilst she made her own strokes, even whilst Mr. Worpingham made his. Once, after a peculiarly virulent foozle, Mr. Worpingham was perilously near to an explosion—to explaining that he really *must* have silence upon his strokes. But with a mighty effort he restrained himself—even contrived to smile doggedly when Miss Garrick chaffed him upon the foozle. When it is added that Mr. Worpingham was one down at the time, I think that any golfer will admit that there was romance in the sunlit air.

It is a pleasure to be able to record that the match was halved on the ninth green after something like two hours of exacting toil. Charles Worpingham had to get down a ten-feet putt on an undulating green to square the match, and mere proper pride made it a vital matter that he should not be beaten. He putted, after laborious examination, with clenched teeth and eyes partially closed from excitement, and the ball stuck in the hole. Masculine honour was saved, and the two returned to the village without any stain upon the contentment of their friendship.

After that day the pair may be said to have joined forces. Each provided for the other the only chance of company upon an island void of human life save for its few native inhabitants. And human company, and a listener, as has been hinted, were vitally necessary to Miss Garrick's existence. She knew that she talked brightly and well, and it may be that it seemed to her a pity and even a sin that her gifts should be wasted upon rabbits. Charles Indigo Worpingham appeared to have been sent from heaven for her benefit. The man was obviously a gentleman, and, as obviously, he was eager for her friendship. So Miss Herminia Garrick let him have it. She was of an age when common-sense can be allowed to guide one's actions, and when one's own desires are more compelling than orthodox reserve.

As for Charles Indigo Worpingham, he was in love for the first time, as he told himself proudly, in his life. It was more probably about the ninth, but the other occasions had faded away into the mists of the past. And there seemed nothing to prevent the happy consummation of his romantic passion. He had sufficient to live upon, and the lady was obviously possessed of private means. Mr. Worpingham strode about the island as one who walks on air, and ever at his side moved Miss Garrick, conversing on all matters in heaven and earth. It was perhaps as well that she seldom required lengthy or carefully-thought-out responses from her cavalier. For Mr. Worpingham, naturally not unintelligent, was at this time much below his normal powers of brain. He saw all things through a rosy mist—the rolling slopes of the island, its grey-brown, dominating castle, the tiny stone-built village, and the mainland across the arm of sea. Only the vivacious face of Miss Herminia Garrick was clear to his bewildered eyes.

He made his proposal upon a perfect, windless evening somewhere within the ruins of the old, red-flushed, crumbling priory. The sea was an unrippled, opal-tinted mirror reflecting the soft-hued glories of the evening sky. The red light waned so slowly that it seemed as though the day would never pass. It is possible that Mr. Worpingham exaggerated his own importance in the universe, but he had a shadowy notion at the back of his whirling brain that this evening had been appointed and set apart through all the centuries for the telling of his love. The tawny red of the sunset seemed to dwell in suspense upon the sky, waiting for him to speak. And without doubt an elderly magpie *was* regarding him with a kind of indignant, bright-eyed curiosity from an opening in the great square tower. His glance slightly disconcerted Mr. Worpingham, and he wished that the bird would look away. He was standing with Miss Garrick beneath the lovely single arch that soars up in naked triumph from the ruin. Miss

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Garrick seemed to be expecting nothing in the world less than a proposal of marriage. As a matter of stern fact, she was discoursing upon the merits of Breton onions! Mr. Worpingham wished for once that she would fall silent for a moment. But the thing had to be done. Charles Indigo Worpingham frowned at the magpie, cleared his throat anxiously, and laid his heart and income at the feet of Miss Garrick. Are you curious as to the exact form of his proposal? Well, then, you shall have it. "Er—Herminia, I—er—love you. Will you—er—marry me?"

Ten minutes later two people left the ruins and walked separately and rather sadly to their temporary homes.

Miss Garrick had refused Mr. Worpingham. His offer had genuinely surprised her. (Great talkers *do* see less than other people.) She could not conceive what the man wanted more than they now enjoyed. Had they not pleasant comradeship and charming conversation? Why, then, should they not go on as they were? But Mr. Worpingham, chagrined and disappointed, could not take this view. The island had lost its charms for him. He had serious thoughts of returning to the mainland.

But he did not go. He lingered where

"Mr. Worpingham . . . passed round the sandhill and sighted the speaker."

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he was, like a middle-aged moth. He strode for twenty-four hours, proud, lonely, and unhappy, about those haunts that he had once frequented in a fashion so different. But at the end of that sad time he discovered the unsuspected strength of his position. In a sense, Miss Garrick was at the mercy of his generosity. She had declined to marry him, but she could not exist upon the island without a listener!

She accosted him upon the second day after the proposal, and they patched up a truce. They agreed to resume their friendly intercourse. Each of them construed that arrangement according to his or her wishes. Miss Garrick resumed her discourses upon general topics; about once a day Mr. Worpingham, for his part, spasmodically renewed his tale of love.

But soon he discovered that this was the one subject uncongenial to his companion. Directly it was started, Miss Garrick would quit his side, would hurry away, leaving him gasping and disconsolate.

Mr. Worpingham realised sadly that his wooing made no progress, and yet he had the conviction that, given a fair hearing, the lady might be won. He racked his brains for a means of winning that hearing, and one evening, standing moodily beside the landing-place, gazing vacantly at the long line of posts that marked the way to the mainland, a simple but brilliant scheme revealed itself to him.

That very night Mr. Worpingham put certain leading questions to an ancient mariner concerning the rising and falling of the tide, and next day after lunch he suggested to Miss Garrick a walk upon the sands towards the mainland.

"It will be charming," that lady answered brightly. "I suppose there is no danger of our being cut off by the tide?"

"That will be all right," Mr. Worpingham responded quite masterfully, and the two set out upon their expedition in high spirits.

Certainly there was no appearance of danger about the sands. They stretched for miles, bare and brown and hard, scarred by a single track of hoofs that revealed where a cart had lately passed. It appeared that you might walk dry-shod to the distant mainland, save for one narrow trickle of water far out in the middle. Miss Garrick and Mr. Worpingham followed steadily the line of posts, with the island a dark waving line upon their right, like a huge stranded whale. There were very many chattering, busy gulls upon the sands, and twice above their heads a V-shaped wedge of wild duck went winging. Once Miss Garrick drew her companion's attention to a kind of square platform upon posts reached by a ladder.

"It is a place of refuge against the tide," he answered carelessly. "Such shelters occur with some regularity along the line of posts, as you see."

And then he changed the subject with rather suspicious promptitude, but Miss Garrick failed to see anything sinister about those refuges.

As a matter of fact, she was enjoying herself exceedingly. Mr. Worpingham was proving himself, as usual, a born and gifted listener. They had walked for very far without fatigue, and had almost reached that gleaming lane of water before anything occurred to jar upon her pleasure. Then, quite carelessly and without nervousness, she drew her companion's attention to a rather curious phenomenon in the distance.

"What is that odd line creeping towards us over the sand?" she asked pleasantly. But as she gazed, her face grew pale. "Is it water? Can it be—the tide?" she asked.

It *was* the tide, beyond all doubt. Across those flat sands it was advancing in a leaping line a foot or so in depth. It seemed to be coming on at racing speed, and the central channel was widening rapidly.

"It is certainly the tide, but do not be alarmed," Mr. Worpingham answered in a minute, with fine courage. "We must make for one of the refuges. There is nothing else to do."

That at least was fully apparent by now. He caught Miss Garrick's hand, and they ran together to the foot of the nearest ladder. They reached it dry-shod, but, as they gained the platform above, the gleaming vanguard of the tide was already gurgling below them.

"What an escape!" gasped Miss Garrick. "How long shall we have to stay here?"

Mr. Worpingham took out his watch.

"For four or five hours, I fear, unless a boat or vehicle arrives," he answered. "Miss Garrick—Herminia, I have now an opportunity, of which I propose to avail myself, to press my suit. With your permission, I propose to speak at some little length, for perhaps an hour or more, as may seem advisable, of my deep and genuine feelings towards you!"

Miss Garrick gasped again, and stared at Mr. Worpingham as though she entertained doubts of his sanity.

"For an hour! You propose to speak for

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an hour?" she said. "Good Heavens!" And then a dark suspicion came to her. "Can this mishap be a—a plot on your part, Mr. Worpingham? You remember that I raised the question of the tides, and you professed to know all about them."

Mr. Worpingham was able to meet her outraged gaze quite frankly. "I will not deceive you, Herminia," he said—"it *is* a plot. You would never listen to me, and I saw no other chance of compelling your—er—attention. I, of course, sincerely regret being obliged to cause you any discomfort."

"I think it is abominable of you—simply abominable!" Miss Garrick cried excitedly. "I should never have thought you would do such a thing! I took you for a gentleman! It simply proves that no man in the world is to be trusted! Oh, if we ever get out of this, I never wish to speak to you again!"

And upon these indignant lines Miss Garrick proceeded to speak for some little while. The crimeful Mr. Worpingham made no attempt to interrupt her or to defend himself. He sat upon the edge of the refuge and waited with patience. When at last Miss Garrick fell silent, having partially exhausted her wrathful ideas, he cleared his throat with precision as for a lengthy speech.

"I will now," he said mildly, "embark upon that sketch or outline of my feelings for you, Herminia, which I have indicated."

"I do not see how I am to prevent your doing so," Miss Garrick admitted moodily.

And with another glance at his watch, Mr. Worpingham began, in his hand a sheet of paper covered with careful notes.

It is to be supposed that he spoke rather well when he had lost his first stiff self-consciousness. But he had only been speaking for some thirty minutes, and may be said to have only just warmed to his subject, when Miss Garrick gave a little cry.

"Oh, there is a cart coming towards us! It will take us off!" she exclaimed.

Mr. Worpingham grew very pale. He saw himself a criminal all in vain. He felt assured that he had not done justice to his topic—he knew how much there was still to say.

"Then it is all no good!" he said very drearily.

Miss Garrick glanced at him with severity.

"Yes," she said sternly, "your plot has failed, and I don't think you have behaved nicely at all."

Mr. Worpingham made no answer to the accusation other than a species of groan.

"You admit," Miss Garrick said, "that it has failed?"

"Yes," Mr. Worpingham answered sadly, "I do."

It will never be known whether mere feminine contradictoriness was not largely responsible for Miss Garrick's next words. They were certainly surprising. She looked away towards the cart, which was very near by now.

"As a matter of fact," she said inconsequently, "it has succeeded!"

MEDITATION ADDRESSED TO A DRIED HADDOCK.

OH, full of bones and yellow as the sand
That bounds thy native element, the *sea*!
Victim of what inscrutable decree
Wert thou pursued with nets and brought to land,
Much marketed, changed much from hand to hand,
Until at last, presented now to me,
Thou dost appear—excuse the simile—
A leathern fish indifferently tann'd!

I raised the cover with expectant thrill,
Forgetting it was Tuesday, and behold!
Not Sunday's sausage fragrant from the grill,
Nor Monday's scrambled eggs all white and gold,
But only thou, more unattractive still
To-day, when I am late and thou art cold!

HANSARD WATT.

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THE FROGS.

By CHRISTOPHER STONE.

ON the day before we left Monte Carlo, Brenda received a last plaintive letter from Joan. "My darling mother," it ran, "have you got the frogs? I hope you are quite well. I am quite well. With love from your loving Joan." It was not the first time that we had heard of the frogs. In some ill-considered moment of maternal solicitude, Brenda had promised Joan to bring her back some green frogs from the Riviera, and letters dunning us for them had rained upon us, like a fabulous downpour of the wretched creatures themselves, ever since we had reached Monte Carlo. Every night as we drove or walked up from the Club to our hotel, and heard the Aristophanic chorus from a neighbouring garden, we had said: "To-morrow we really must get those frogs for Baby." The thought obsessed us; it worried us far more than our losses at the tables. That gardenful of croaking frogs seemed to mock us, to threaten our peace of mind and the harmony of our holiday.

"You can go over to Mentone to-day," said Brenda, buttering a roll, "and get the frogs while I am packing. I must pack, you know."

"It isn't much fun——" I began testily, for I was reading the little pink paper which is sometimes called *The Daily Telegram*.

"Well, you've got to go, and there's an end of it," Brenda interrupted. "It's a lovely day. Don't lie there rustling that paper. Get up and have your bath."

I got up, and after *déjeuner* I went by train to Mentone; it was the quickest way. We knew that frogs were to be bought at Mentone. At first everyone, including the urbane and omniscient M. Gaillard, had professed polite ignorance about the whole matter; but at last Mrs. Whitehouse, equally urbane and omniscient, had come to the rescue.

"*Of course*," she declared—"of course you can get them at Mentone, at a little shop past the Casino, on the left, where they sell china oranges on plates and things—you can't possibly make a mistake. And," she added impressively, "there is a blue frog, too. But they won't sell that to you."

My own impression, after this single visit to Mentone, is that there are china oranges on plates in every shop in the town. But Brenda, who knows me perhaps better than I know myself, says that I have a genius for not finding my way to places. As a fact, I was quite fatigued when at last I found myself in the historic shop, and beheld a little glass case containing about a dozen green frogs, one blue frog, and one which was half green and half blue. They cost fifty centimes each, the green ones, and the blue one was, as predicted, not for sale. I made no offer for the hybrid. I ordered four, and was obliged to miss three trains because they would need a ladder in their glass jar to prevent them from being drowned in half an inch of water at the bottom, and the "boy"—who may have existed, but I never saw him—was out on an errand. I pottered about the town and won five francs at the Casino, and then returned to the shop, where I found my four treasures in a jar with a ladder and some green stuff. I asked Madame what they ate.

"Flies," she said. "Or if, as sometimes happens in the winter in England, there are no flies, they will eat red worms alive, which you can buy at a bird shop."

That was the gist of it in French, and Madame showed me how to catch flies with a swoop of the hand. She then held them by the wings and put them through a small hole in the wire netting which covered the jar.

"They can live for as much as four days without food," she told me.

"And you won't sell me the blue frog?"

"Oh, no, sir, that is not for sale." But she induced me to buy a blue *china* frog for sixty centimes, an extremely good likeness of the priceless original. I slipped it into my waistcoat pocket and went to the station carrying my precious burden.

Brenda was visibly delighted. She had

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honestly doubted my ability to make even so paltry a purchase as four green frogs, and I believe that she had only sent me out in order to get the packing begun in peace. "Aren't they sweet?" she kept on saying. "Dear, what are you doing?"

"Catching flies, of course," said I. "The poor beggars must eat."

I explained to her, as quietly as I could, that they had only had three flies in the shop, and that it was quite time to catch some more for them. Brenda, who would not touch a fly, alive or dead, without gloves on, was inclined to sneer at my efforts and to call me clumsy. She can have had no conception of the difficulties involved in the fly chase. When, for instance, after ten minutes of arduous exercise, I entrapped one in the bathroom, and felt it moving feebly in my closed hand, I called Brenda to bring the frogs in to me; but, alas, the prey escaped as I was trying to catch hold of its wings! I was more cunning with the next, but in my eagerness was unfortunate enough to kill it. Brenda's scorn was beginning to irritate me as much as my so-called clumsiness irritated her, when at last I caught a fly between the muslin curtains and the window, and pinned it down with one hand while I dexterously slipped the other up under the curtain and gripped it by the wings. The prey was conducted alive to the jar and introduced. The frogs took no notice. At last one, the most agile and apparently youthful, bestirred himself and with incredible greed ate it. He ate every single fly that I gave him that evening—four in all—and I christened him Beelzebub. Brenda said, while dressing for dinner, that she wished I had never bought the creatures. But the thought of Joan at home, patiently inditing letters to us and waiting for the promised frogs, softened this wild, capricious wish.

We had a farewell dinner with Mrs. Whitehouse and two other friends, and the story of the frogs was told. But it was the flies which really predominated in the conversation, and which filled my thoughts and attention. I watched them settling on neighbouring tables, on the flowers, on the windows, and I longed to get up and catch them. Brenda told our guests that I was going mad. The strain was certainly telling upon me, especially as we had left the frogs in a strong draught on the window-sill of the bathroom upstairs, contrary to my wishes. In the argument as to the proper atmosphere for captive frogs, Brenda had won, as usual; but all through dinner I felt that I ought to have been firm, and have put them out of the draught in some cool and sheltered spot. I caught a fly in the dining-room while the others were drinking coffee, and ran upstairs with it. The frogs were certainly not looking well; they were all clinging to the walls of the jar and pressing their bilious little bodies against the glass. Beelzebub ate the fly. I left the jar inside the room and out of the draught, and went downstairs again.

That evening we played at the Casino, and I, with my blue china frog in my pocket, was, for a wonder, successful. I was in a morose, fly-haunted mood, or I should have staked higher; but, as it was, I felt opulent when we left the rooms. Brenda declared that the blue frog had brought me luck, and I was inclined to believe it. When we reached the hotel, Brenda went upstairs and I lingered behind in the hall, having observed that there were many flies on the mirrors there. I was assisted in the chase by a hall-boy—who had a marvellous gift for catching them in mid air between his fingers—and by the night-porter, a most delightful man, friendly and sympathetic.

I went upstairs leading three flies by the wings, and found Brenda regarding the frogs with consternation. It looked as if they had been fighting. One of them had a strange wound like a large black hole on his right side, and when I fell to counting his fingers and toes, I found that three were missing from one hand. They all breathed in a strangled way, as if they had no air, and Brenda did not hesitate to attribute this to my having moved them from the window-sill. I have since discovered that it is their usual method of respiration. We argued about them for some time, till Brenda wanted to go to sleep.

"What's that?" she suddenly exclaimed, just as I was dozing off. A hoarse, grating noise filled the room.

"They're croaking," I said sleepily. "It'll be fine to-morrow."

"Dear, *do* get out of bed and see if they are all right."

I refused as long as I could; but when Brenda began to get plaintively out herself, I was obliged to forestall her and go to the bathroom. The frogs were looking alert and cheerful, and Beelzebub's throat and chest were dilated to an extraordinary and perilous degree. When I woke up the next morning, my first impulse, after unlocking the door, was to go into the bathroom and see the frogs.

"I'm quite certain," said Brenda, who

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claims to have second sight, "that you will find a corpse there."

She was right; the wounded frog had succumbed to his injuries, and was lying stiff and stark at the bottom of the ladder. The other three were up at the top of the jar, trying to look unconcerned, with bright, blinking eyes and a fixed, fatuous smile on their faces. My experience of frogs, intimate if short, has led me to regard them as strangely unresponsive. Their minds seem to work slowly; they lack will-power. Possibly they have ears to hear with, but they have none to prick up, and you may speak to them for a long while without observing any signs of comprehension on their part. I tried puffing smoke into their faces, and found, with the aid of a watch, that they took forty-seven seconds to decide whether they liked it or not. But Brenda declared that I was cruel, and I desisted. This, of course, was after I had removed the corpse from the jar, and had given it an adequate if not particularly decent burial. I was dressing slowly and musing upon the day of packing and travelling ahead of me, when there came a tap at the door of my dressing-room. It was the night-porter in mufti, beaming with honest pleasure, and holding in his hand a soda-water bottle full of flies. The thoughtful fellow, having nothing better to do, had employed the night watches in catching flies in the kitchen, and he was delighted by his own thoughtfulness. We removed the netting from the top of the jar and the stopper from the bottle, and urged the myriad flies into the jar. For a while the air was black with fugitives.

"Stop," I cried—"that will be enough!"

"Better give them all," said the night-porter, shaking solid lumps of flies into the jar; "they have far to travel."

When he left me—I tipped him well, for I liked his forethought—I looked at the jar. It was quite full of flies, which lay in the water at the bottom, or crawled up the sides, or preened themselves on the ladder. The frogs were almost hidden. I don't know how many flies they ate, but they were soon perfectly indifferent to the banquet spread around them.

Brenda was horrified when I carried the jar into her room.

"They'll die—I know they'll die!" she kept on saying. "They'll gorge themselves to death. Can't you let the flies out?"

I protested that the frogs were enjoying themselves hugely and having the time of their lives; but when I left the room, Brenda had the courage to let more than half of the flies out. We had a dispute about that, but, in view of the packing and the journey ahead of us, I was too much of a gentleman to embark on more than a gentlemanly grumble, such as any wife may expect. It was no good, for when we reached the station and took our seats in the train de luxe for Paris, I was pained to observe that there were no flies at all in the jar, only three bloated frogs, a ladder, a little water, and some green stuff.

We were to stay in Paris for a few days, and as we drove from the station, Brenda drew my attention from the *bouquinistes* on the Quai du Louvre to the other side of the road, where there were "bird shops."

"This evening," she said, "you can go and buy a proper cage for the frogs."

They looked well after their journey through the night, and when we reached the hotel, I put them outside the window on the sill, as our rooms were very stuffy. We looked at them occasionally during the day, and they seemed to be contented. But, to our horror, we soon realised that there were no flies in Paris. I exaggerate—there was one. It sat on the electric light globe in the middle of the room, out of reach, and would not be moved. I turned on the light, and when its feet were scorched, it flew away, but I could not find it anywhere. The next morning it was on the globe again, persistently defying capture. I began to ask people for flies—the *concierge*, the hall-boys, the waiters, the chamber-maid. They were all sympathetic, but could suggest no means of making flies. I must pay a tribute to hotel porters, to their kindness and enterprise, for that evening one of them appeared at my door with some raw meat in a piece of newspaper, which he had bought for two sous as being undoubtedly the correct food for frogs. Not without repugnance I managed to transfer a lump of chopped meat from the newspaper to the top rung of the ladder. The frogs regarded it suspiciously, and the next day it was still untouched.

The situation, as politicians say, gave rise to the liveliest apprehension. Brenda, who had only a week to spend in Paris, was on the move all day long, and she had a horror of going anywhere without me. Consequently, I had little or no leisure, and, indeed, when immersed in the subtleties of dressmakers' shops and the glories of the shop-windows of the Rue de la Paix, was sometimes tempted to treat the fate of the frogs with callousness. But on the fourth evening Brenda stayed in the hotel after

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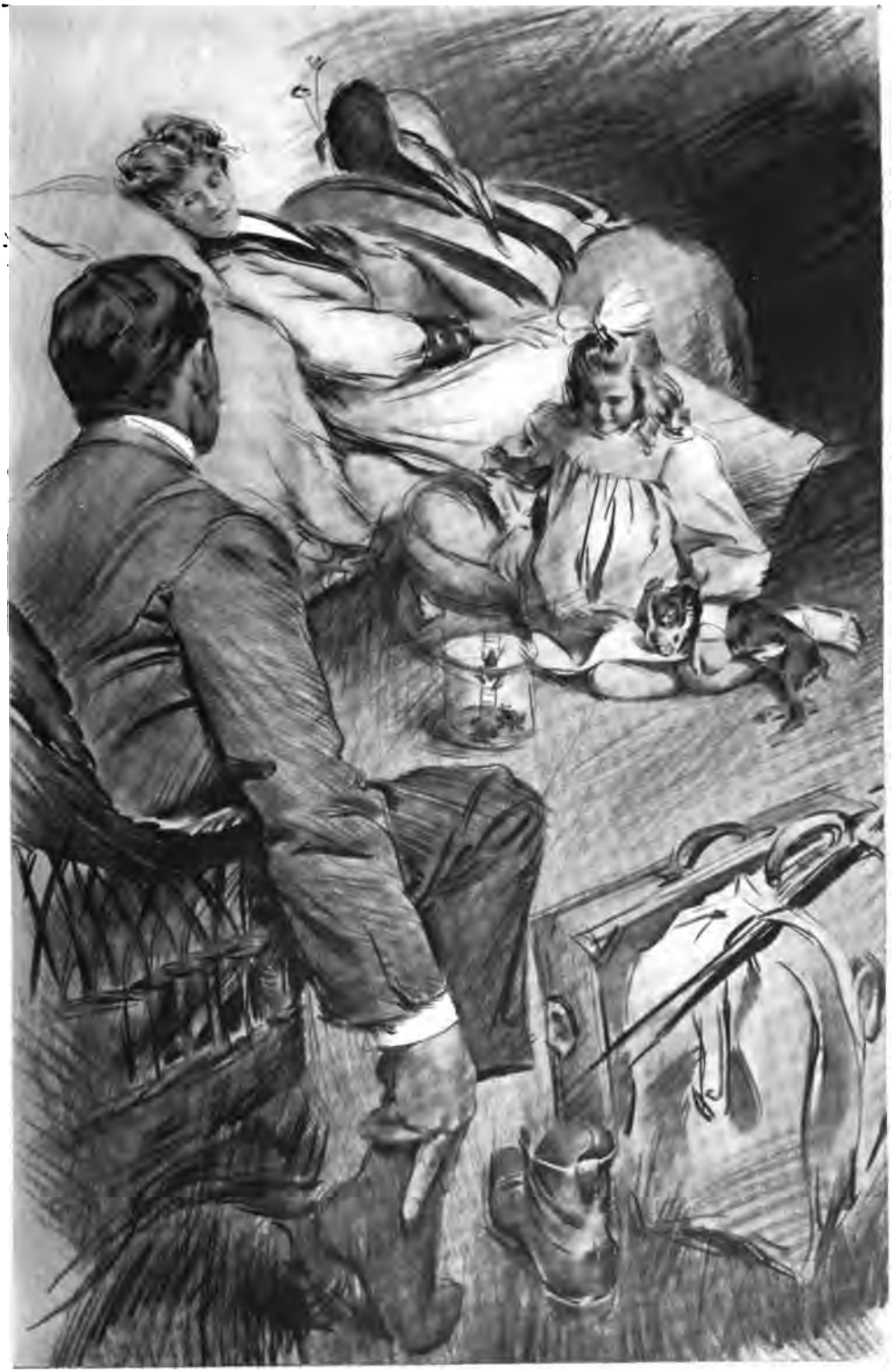

"Her delight in the sulky little brutes."

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tea, "to rest," and I sallied out in the direction of the Quai du Louvre. I asked for a frog-cage in half a dozen shops, including four which sold birds exclusively, one which sold only fishing-tackle, and one which had no end of aquariums and fish-bowls, but no frog-cages. It was desperate.

Then I remembered that I had not actually asked for food, but only for a cage. So I began again. It was in the aquarium shop that I first saw light. The bearded dame there said that frogs would eat worms.

"Red worms?" I asked, remembering Madame at Mentone.

Yes. But, alas, she had none in stock! I must go along to No. 4, next to the *café* at the corner, where, perhaps——

I dashed out of the shop, profuse in incoherent thanks.

At No. 4 I was successful. The lady—this time with no more than a moustache—opened a draw and picked up a pennyworth of red wriggling little worms in her fingers, wrapped them in a piece of paper, and said "Good night" to me. I went home in a state of elation, and dropped some of the worms into the jar, while Brenda watched them eagerly as they disported themselves in the water.

Either the frogs were fastidious or they were banting after their surfeit of flies. Suffice it to say that, when we crossed from Boulogne to Folkestone, where Joan was awaiting us, after our week in Paris—a week in Paris being, as everyone knows, anything between ten days and a month—they had apparently eaten nothing at all. At any rate, we delivered them alive into Joan's hands, and it was some return for our heart-searchings when we watched her delight in the sulky little brutes. Five minutes after we arrived, she was scouring the house for flies. It was a lodging-house, and till that moment I had never conceived a lodging-house at the seaside without flies in it; but, in fact, there were none. And yet, on that first evening, one of the frogs gave tongue and hoarsely predicted, as we imagined, fine weather. Need I add that it rained all the next day?

We were at Folkestone a week, and our united and unremitting efforts failed to produce either flies or a frog-cage. There were, of course, gold-fish bowls, but we scorned them. When we reached London, we calculated that the frogs had eaten nothing for three weeks; and without delay I set off to the Stores, on Brenda's suggestion, to find out what, if anything, we might expect—confidently expect—frogs to eat in the absence of live flies.

I made my way to the menagerie, or whatever they call it, and inquired of the shopman.

"They eat live flies," he told me with typical British stolidity.

"But if there *are* no flies to be got?" I asked in desperation.

"I give them meal-worms," he said, laying his hand—ye gods!—on a frog-cage such as I had seen at Mentone. It contained about a dozen green frogs, indistinguishable from those which we had given to Joan.

I was flabbergasted. If only I had known that there were frogs at the Stores!

I went home with some meal-worms in a tobacco tin, and the next day I bought—at a bird shop—a beautiful cage like a conservatory, and the three creatures were inducted with much ceremony.

That was a fortnight ago. The frogs flourish. Joan says that they know their names now, and turn their heads when she calls them. All I know is that so far they have not touched any of the meal-worms.

OF A LOVER.

DOES she weep? Then are her eyes
—Wilful clouds in summer skies—
Moved with happy mysteries.
Does she smile? Oh, heart, beware!
So near are laughters to despair.

FRANCIS MEYNELL.

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THE TALE OF A FROCK.

By Mrs. COMYNS CARR.

IT lay on a chair at Granny Le Marchant's side — a faint rose-coloured satin frock — real *vieux rose*, not the imitation of Paris man milliners—and as pretty a ball dress as any modern belle could wish. For it was not a modern frock; it had the aroma of its seventy years, and its quaint festoons of flat-pleated satin ribbons, fastened with tiny cords and tassels of silver, told of the modes of Jane Austen's precise or saucy heroines.

Granny's blue eyes had a faint film over them as they rested on it, and she just sighed as she looked up and out into the white crispness of the winter's day that lay around the cosy verandah wherein she was sheltered.

A brilliant southern sun made every little particle of the clean mountain snow shine like a diamond, and upon the sky's blue background the laden horizontal boughs of pine trees traced silvery lines, while from their topmost crests fairy icicles hung glittering where the lighter snow had yielded a little to the heat.

It was all a blending of summer and winter, this gay, garish feast of sparkling white, or rather of winter with a summer's heart; and Granny Le Marchant, with her pretty blush-rose complexion and her sweet, bright eyes and her silver hair, was the prettiest blend of it all.

She had let the little knitted garment, destined probably for the hundredth baby that her large heart had mothered, drop into her lap, and the blue eyes were very tender as they rested thoughtfully upon the slim figure of a girl who stood without in the brightness, the love-light shining out of her pretty young face.

She was a very young girl, perhaps not more than seventeen, and the light must have been shining for the first time, for she made no effort to conceal it, and was probably unaware that it was there at all as she gazed adoringly up into the face of the tall, strong youth who bent over her.

They had been ski-ing, and she was a little dishevelled, but the fair curly locks straying beyond her little cap only added to her girlishness, and in both of them the gladness of health and exercise glowed warm, emphasising their sweet youth.

Granny Le Marchant smiled as she watched them wander away together; but the smile vanished, lingering, and a tiny frown gathered on the white brow as she put on her spectacles and took up a letter that was lying in her lap.

"Dear Mother," she read, "Sir Montague Kane leaves London to-day, and will probably be with you to-morrow. I have reason to think that he will propose to Elspeth. I know she is young, and that he is older, but I'm not at all sure that, in these dangerous days, it's not safer for a girl to be married before she begins to fancy that she understands things. Don't suppose that I'm coercing the child in the least. She is very fond of Sir Montague, and I know she will be very proud to be chosen by him. I feel no doubt as to what her answer will be, and it's a great relief to me to think that one, at least, of my fatherless and penniless girls should be well provided for, and in such a flattering manner.

"I hope your rheumatism, etc., etc."

Granny folded up the letter. The latter part didn't interest her, but the first part interested her too much for her peace. Oh, she knew very well that Sir Montague's proposal would be flattering. He had been an Anglo-Indian magnate, and was now the head of a very important Oriental trading concern; he was full of honours and he was very rich.

And yet—and yet, be it whispered low, Granny was not on Sir Montague's side.

To tell the truth, she had whipped Elspeth away from London to avoid what she foresaw, and she was annoyed that the man should come blundering out here just when she thought she had outwitted him. For he

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had come—she had learned at the bureau that he had arrived by the night train.

But it was too late for annoyance; diplomacy was required.

The door at the end of the verandah opened, and a handsome, well-groomed man of about forty came in briskly.

Little pleased as she was, the grand manner came at the instant's call, and she held out her hand with a welcoming smile.

"So you have found the way to us, Sir Montague?" she said. "Very kind of you, for I'm afraid this is a dull place to any but the very young, who love to be out and doing from morn till eve."

Granny resumed her knitting, but her hand shook a little, and her ball of white wool rolled down to the floor. Sir Montague picked it up and restored it.

"And you think I'm too old for that?" said he with a smile.

"Too old for what, Sir Montague?" inquired she innocently, though she knew very well in her heart for what she thought him too old.

"Well, for the things which the young love."

"It depends upon whether you like the things, I suppose. You're such a travelled man, and have had so many large and varied interests in your life, that one can scarcely imagine you really caring for the amusements which are natural, and necessary, to seventeen or twenty."

There was a pause.

"Ah!" said Sir Montague. "Well, among the many things which I have learnt during my long life"—there was a little curl of the lip now—"is the advisability of going straight for one's fence. Mrs. Le Marchant, I have come out here to ask your granddaughter to be my wife."

Granny's head went up. After all, she couldn't help liking the man. What a pity he was not twenty years younger! But even had he been, he would have had to come twenty minutes earlier, before that little scene which she had been prying upon outside in the snow.

"I may add that I have her mother's permission to try my luck," she heard him say.

"But you naturally would not wish the final decision to rest with anyone but the child herself."

Sir Montague smiled his rather wry smile again.

"I see you are not hopeful," said he. "And yet, if I may be pardoned for saying so conceited a thing, *the child* has shown me a great deal of kindness. I think she likes me."

Granny thought so too—that was the trouble. She had seen how the girl was flattered by the attentions of this bigwig—how very nearly she was won by his wit and his handsome looks, his easy charm of manner and his very perfect method of courting.

But only nearly won, and that was a fortnight ago. And there was that scene in the snow. She could not have been deceived. Surely it would be safe to let the child decide.

To Sir Montague the knitting seemed to be progressing with annoying precision; but he was a man, and did not know that the old lady had dropped a stitch.

She laid the work down and flashed upon him the full brilliance of a smile which had laid many low in her day.

"Of *course* she likes you," said she. "That's not the question at all."

"Why not?"

The old lady threw up two pretty little wrinkled hands.

"Oh, don't ask me—ask her!" cried she, laughing.

He rose, answering the laugh as best beseemed him.

"Thank you," said he. "I will. I hear there's a fancy-dress ball to-night. She shall give me some dances. It'll be my chance."

Granny continued to smile, but her spirit fell a little. For he was a beautiful dancer, and she knew that Roy Melrose was not.

"Thank you at least," said he, "for leaving her free."

He went out into the snow again as Elspeth bounded into the drawing-room behind, ready dressed for lunch.

And Granny wondered if she had *said* that she was going to leave Elspeth free.

The girl rushed at the chair upon which the old rose satin was displayed, eyes dancing, hands uplifted.

"Oh, Granny," she cried, "is that it? Then it has come in time! How perfectly ripping!"

She seized the dainty garment, holding it up to her pretty face, whose blush-rose complexion—just the complexion that Granny must have had at her age—it certainly suited to perfection.

The old lady gazed critically.

"It'll want a little taking in," said she, "but not much. I——"

She was going to say, "*I* was slight at your age," but she refrained.

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"I think it's too utterly sweet! Is it an eighteenth-century frock, Granny?"

Granny bristled. "I'm not *quite* so old as that, my dear," was on her lips. Luckily she remembered that she had never told her granddaughter that the frock was her own, and suddenly she resolved that she would not tell her, but that she would tell her something else about it which she had never thought to tell anyone.

"No," she replied, "it was made in 1840."

"Just fancy!" murmured Elspeth. "I wonder if it becomes me? I wonder if the girl who wore it was like me?"

"If she thought as much about what became her—and she probably did—I should say very like you," retorted the old lady.

Elspeth laughed merrily.

"You always think girls are thinking about their appearance, Granny."

"So they are, and so they ought to be—when they're not thinking about their lovers."

Elspeth hid the quick blush that flew to her cheek in her grandmother's neck, mingling soft blonde curls with soft white ones.

"Oh, you shocking old Granny!" she murmured.

"Well, I didn't mean to put it in the plural. There should be only one, and a girl has got to make quite sure which one it is."

Elspeth fidgeted and turned the talk.

"Do you think it may have been a trousseau frock?" she asked, fingering the dainty trimming tenderly.

For an instant Mrs. Le Marchant's whimsical smile turned to a certain far-off solemnity.

"No," she said, "it wasn't a trousseau frock. The girl to whom it belonged wore it at a ball before her marriage, and something happened at that ball which made her never want to wear it again, though she has kept it all her life."

There was a pause.

The girl lowered her gaze, almost as though she felt ashamed to look into that far-off room of memory.

But the blue old eyes came back after a minute, to rest lovingly on the bent head; the sense of the moment had come back into them.

"Would you like to know what happened at that ball long ago, Elspeth?"

The bent head nodded.

"That girl made a mistake. She accepted the wrong man. She was very young, and the man whom she accepted was a charming and a very distinguished man, and chosen of her parents. But it was a mistake. It dosen't often happen that a girl has a chance of marrying her first love, and happiness of a different sort may await her in the future. But if she *gets* the chance"—and Granny tossed her fine old head defiantly—"well, my dear, I think she's foolish not to take it. Yes, *whatever* the disadvantages may be. That girl"—pointing to the rose satin frock—"made that mistake, and it was a *wrong* to the man whom she married. Yes, a wrong which, if he had not had a fine nature, might have led to real trouble."

There was another pause.

"Both those men are dead now," added the old lady gently. "One of them fell in the Crimea, and the other lived an honoured life, and died sincerely mourned by his wife. But the first happening was a mistake, believe me, and they might all have been worse punished for it."

Elspeth did not dare look up; she was awed.

But Granny's dainty old hands, which had been folded in her lap, leapt emphatically now into the air.

"People who have reached what are called years of discretion are apt to think it very clever to look ahead and see risks," she cried. "Heaven love us, of course there are risks! They're what make the game worth the candle. But youth should know no discretion, and be free to follow the call of its own heart bravely."

Elspeth raised her head now; there was wonder in her blue eyes.

A wise little smile had come back to Granny's face as she slowly tore up the letter in her lap and threw the pieces away.

The gong sounded for the midday meal.

"Sir Montague Kane has just arrived," said she shortly. "He'll probably ask to have his place put next to ours at *table d'hôte*."

Elspeth jumped up.

"Sir Montague Kane!" echoed she.

"Yes. And a very nice, sensible fellow he is," said Granny slowly, "who can see straight and take his fence pluckily, I'll be bound. I shouldn't wonder if he were very understanding—for a man."

Granny stretched out for her stick, and rose slowly.

"There, put the frock away," said she, "and after lunch we'll try it on. It ought to suit you; but, mind it's not yours yet. so

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don't spoil it, though, if you're a good girl, I'll leave it to you in my will."

* * * * *

The verandah was full of palms and flowers that night, and quaintly-dressed couples ran laughing in and out of it under the fairy lamps.

Granny sat in it as before, only she sat in the gangway in her best—the centre of a little admiring court—and looked at the dancers in the room within, approving one, criticising another, disgusted at a third, for the ways of the twentieth century were not the ways she considered elegant.

"Oh, you should learn to dance," she was saying, in answer to some boyishly scornful remark upon the exercise from Roy Melrose, who sat disconsolate beside her. "Why, in my day, every gentleman knew how to dance, though not"—watching a couple shuffling and lurching past in what they called a one-step—"*not* as they dance now. Yes, you should be dancing—girls love a good dancer."

The lad pouted, watching Elspeth, lovely in the rose satin frock, as she glided round with Sir Montague Kane, every fibre of her enjoying the mere motion of the perfect rhythm.

"You try," advised Granny wisely. "Elspeth is a beautiful dancer; she'll teach you."

And she smiled, but in her heart pitied a little, as she too watched the girl's radiant eyes.

And when presently Sir Montague fetched the fur-lined coat, upon which Granny had insisted, from the vestibule, and, after placing it reverently round Elspeth's shoulders, led her forth to the cool air, Granny, for five minutes or so, wondered.

Would the polished charm of the man of the world win it over foolish youth and romance?

Wicked old Granny to be so keenly on the side of romance!

The couple re-entered the ballroom. Elspeth's head hung a little, and Granny hoped afresh, for Sir Montague did not say a word as he brought her back to the old lady's side.

The lad had risen, offering his seat to the girl.

"This is our dance," said he, when the music struck up, "but I dare say you're tired now, and I should be sure to make a fool of myself."

Then Granny's hope glowed as Elspeth leapt to her feet. Granny trusted the boy *would* make a fool of himself, though not in the way he meant.

The girl was laughing as he led her off, and Sir Montague took the vacant chair.

There was silence while the music drummed, and the dancers stamped and shouted and yelped.

At any other moment Granny would have held her ears and expressed her disapproval in no measured terms; but just now she wanted her ears for something else.

Sir Montague spoke, and she leant to listen.

"I have said my say, and your granddaughter has refused me," he said quietly.

Granny's heart bounded, but she did not speak. She was too honest to say she was sorry, though she was sorry—for *him*.

"I admire her more than ever because she was so frank, so honest," he continued. "She said that a month ago it might have been otherwise, because she didn't yet understand, but that now she understood."

"It's better so than the other way, isn't it?" ventured the old lady gently.

"Oh, far better!" he replied after a pause. And then: "Do you know who the lad is? I haven't looked at the visitors' book yet."

Granny positively blushed. For once she felt herself thoroughly outwitted; but she realised it, and that to be frank, as the child had been, was the honest game. After all, she had only said to him: "Ask *her*—don't ask me."

"You mean the young fellow with whom she is dancing?"

"Obviously." He smiled.

"I know very little *yet*, but he's well-bred," said Granny, innocently stating his first merit in her eyes. "His name is Roy Melrose."

Sir Montague gave vent to an exclamation, and Mrs. Le Marchant looked up.

"I wonder if he hails from the north country?" he said.

"Yes, he does. He happened to mention that his father was a parson in Skye. Do you know him?"

"He must be my own nephew!" laughed Sir Montague, perhaps just a trifle bitterly. "How time flies, to be sure! I haven't been able to see all my relatives since I got home from India, and Skye is a long way off. Well, well! My nephew! His mother was my eldest sister. She died some years ago. I knew there were several boys. Yes, time flies!"

He sat silent a moment, then he said:

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"I'm afraid they must be pretty badly off. I wonder what this lad is doing? He looks very young."

"He is young," agreed Mrs. Le Marchant ruefully. "They're both very young." And then she was sorry, for she had not meant to deal him that last blow.

"'The frock becomes you, child,' she said."

He rose slowly and went across and watched Elspeth and his nephew romping merrily through the "Kitchen Lancers."

Then the boisterous music died down, and the boisterous dancers sank exhausted into seats. He saw Elspeth being tucked by less experienced but ah! more welcome hands than his, into the fur-lined coat, and again he smiled, but this time not bitterly. It had been so utterly absurd of him to suppose that a child like that would care for a man who could, and was going to be, her uncle. Granny's wise words echoed in his ears: "It is better than the other way." Yes, what if she had understood too late?

Outside the porch under the stars, the girl and boy were kissing their first kiss. They didn't feel the twenty degrees of frost, for, as Mrs. Le Marchant had said, they were very young, and their blood was very warm.

"It's awful of me, darling, I know," panted the boy, holding her very tight to his warm breast, "for I've nothing—nothing in

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the world to keep you on. But I simply couldn't stand it when I saw you with that wretch. I *knew* he was going to propose."

"He's not a wretch," laughed Elspeth—"he's a dear. I think it was very nice of him to want to marry me—a great man like him. And if *you* hadn't come and put everything wrong, I'm sure I should have accepted him."

"You nasty little tease!" said Roy Melrose ruefully. "You had better think again, though, since he's such a catch. Who is he?"

"His name is Sir Montague Kane, and he *is* a catch, for all you turn up your nose—clever and nice and very rich."

The boy suddenly loosened his hold.

"Sir Montague Kane!" gasped he. "Why, he's my uncle! Rich! I should think he was rich! He's head of the Orient Trading Company. Oh, Elspeth, I couldn't be such a sneak as to let you refuse *him* for me! Why, we should have to wait years—perhaps till you were nearly old—before I was anything like as rich. And he's a great man—we're very proud of him in the family—and not very old."

A man's voice sounded from the porch.

"Miss Elspeth," it said, "your grandmother is anxious lest you should take cold; she has sent me to fetch you in."

The trim, smart figure of Sir Montague stood at the top of the steps.

The boy and girl turned and ran up. The elder man held out his hand to the lad.

"Mrs. Le Marchant has just told me your name," he said, laughing, "and I find you are my nephew."

"Yes, sir," stammered Elspeth's lover. "I've just found yours out myself. It's—it's very odd!"

"Oh, one gets used to these odd things when one has knocked about the world as I have," laughed Sir Montague. "They're rather amusing."

They all sauntered back together into the now emptying ballroom.

Granny sat still in her chair; her eyes searched their faces. Elspeth's shone again with that love-light which she had seen there in the morning sunshine, and her own grew very bright, almost as though it were *her* romance that had blossomed.

"Come and see me at my office as soon as you get back to London," Sir Montague took occasion to say to the lad presently. "I think I may be able to find you a berth in the firm, if you would care for it."

"Care for it!" gasped the young fellow.

"Well, then, you may count on it."

A murmur of astonished thanks, none the less eloquent for its awkwardness, broke from the lips of Elspeth's lover. But Elspeth scarcely heard; she and her grandmother were smiling at one another. The old lady's scrutinising gaze rested lovingly on the fresh face, so like her own sweetly-faded one—lovingly, too, on the faint, rose-coloured satin that enhanced its fair loveliness.

"The frock becomes you, child," she said.

"There's not another like it in the room!" cried the boy.

"There couldn't be," smiled Elspeth—"it's seventy years old! It belonged to someone whom Granny knew when she was young—someone who——"

She stopped, confused.

"Someone who must have been very like the two of you," said Sir Montague—"as young and as wise. Well, I should stick to the frock, Miss Elspeth. May it bring you luck!"

"So it shall," said Granny a little gravely. "It shall be for her trousseau when she marries."

VESPERAL.

BLUE evening shepherds to their fold
The dark lambs of the rain,
And yonder, with a fleece of gold,
The great west drapes the lane.

The lit pools in the muddy road,
The bathing birds' wet wings,
The quick eyes of the leaping toad,
Seem visionary things—

Phases of glory dim perceived
That lure to deeper sight,
Trailings of truths I once believed,
Shadows of vanished light.

And, as I journey on again,
Mine is a calmer mood;
For lo! the rapture of the lane
Has passed into my blood.

WALLACE BERTRAM NICHOLS.

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COLLIES AND THEIR KIND.

By S. L. BENSUSAN.

Photographs by the Sport & General Illustrations Company.

SOME years ago I was travelling among the foothills of the Atlas Mountains, in a part of the country where the plains are intensely hot, though the hills are clad in everlasting snow. The Berbers, who seem to be the original inhabitants of Northern Africa, and to have been driven to the hills by the Arab hordes of Musa, live on these slopes, and carry on some trade with the alien dwellers of the plain. These Berbers are a pastoral people, owners of large flocks of goats and sheep, and one of them, a farmer who had prospered, was the proud possessor of a collie dog, a rough-haired, intelligent animal whose name, translated, meant "The Father of Sheep," presumably because he looked after them so well. As far as could be gathered through the medium of an interpreter who spoke the Shillah language, this dog had been brought to Saffi, on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, by an Englishman, who had come to the country some years before to shoot big game in the forest of M'amora. The forest that was to have witnessed his triumphs became his grave, though whether he caught fever or met with an accident none could say, but of his sudden end there was no question. His dogs were carried off by his servants, who, by spreading among the tribesmen wonderful stories of their sagacity, sold them advantageously. So this collie, born probably in the North of England, where the hills are fenced and ringed by stone dykes, and there are no more than a few brief weeks of heat in the year, had come to the lands on the flank of Atlas, where, by reason of the cold that settles permanently on the hills, he could endure the weight of his own coat, which, by the way, had become considerably thinner than those of the rough-coated collies we meet in this country.

"THE MARQUIS OF FYTTON."

Winner of six first prizes and two silver cups. Owner, Mr. W. T. Horry.

I seem to see "The Father of Sheep" even now as I take my pen in my hand to write about a dog that has always been a favourite of mine; surely never one moved in stranger company. He it was who drove the rough, angular Barbary sheep to pasture, in the company of a half-clad shepherd boy, who seemed to have escaped from the pages of Theocritus, and sang Shillah songs to his four-footed companion all the day, accompanying himself on a reed pipe. He shared his meal of home-made bread with his dumb friend, and when the evening came, "The Father of Sheep" would round up the flocks and bring them back to the village, where he shared the shepherd's supper and slept in the open air, treated as a friend by people who regard the word "dog" as a term of reproach. For

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more than three years he laboured with distinction in an alien land, and then one of the mountain leopards sometimes to be met along the Atlas slopes came suddenly and noiselessly upon the flock one night, and caring, after the fashion of his kind, more for dog than sheep, carried their guardian away. The village was roused, and in the early morning, when the leopard's tracks were plain upon the ground, all who owned guns followed. They did not find the leopard—he had scented danger and retired considerably in spite of the rough cropping that seemed to be given to him at the time when the sheep were sheared.

The early history of the collie which figures so prominently upon our show benches, and has been known to fetch fancy prices in the past few years, is not known even to the experts of the Collie Club. All sorts of stories are given as to his origin, some holding that he has been a native of these islands from time immemorial, while others believe, not without good reason, that he is descended from the

"SOUTHFORT STAMP."

Winner of four first prizes. Owner, Mr. W. E. Mason.

to the unknown hills—but on the branch of a sandarac tree they saw a part of what had been "The Father of Sheep." The leopard had eaten what he wanted and hung the rest upon a convenient branch to await his return.

So the exiled collie passed away, not unmourned, after three years of what must have been a weary pilgrimage, because the coat of such a dog is clearly not intended to serve in hot climates, and though the hills were much cooler than the plains, there must have been times of the year when he suffered

union of old English sheep-dog and Scottish greyhound. The advocates of this latter theory point out that high breeding makes the collie more and more like a greyhound. The collie is seen to the greatest advantage in the rougher country of Scotland and Wales, where his services as a sheep-dog are very highly valued. Long years of training and selection have developed his intelligence to such a marked degree that he responds to the voice of his master as though the words meant as much to the dog as they do to the man. No instruction calls for repetition;

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"PORCHESTER BLUE SOL."

Winner of first prize at the Horsham Show. Owner, Mr. P. Hodsdon.

ndeed, I have met many shepherds in the rougher parts of these islands whose speech and thought are far more comprehensible to their dogs than to their fellow-men, because the remote sheep farms are miles away from villages, and the shepherds, who live among the hills and spend all their waking hours with their flock, pass a great part of the year so much by themselves. If they do not speak to their dogs, they must needs remain silent altogether. There are sheep farms on the Highlands that are almost inaccessible from the back end of October to the beginning of April. Once a month a van laden with provisions goes as far as it can up the glen leading to the shepherd's cot-house, and leaves the simple stores in some sheltered place to which the shepherd can repair at his leisure. If he can be there when the provisions are brought, the shepherd will have a chat with the carrier; but more often than not he must be with his sheep, and in that case he cannot hope to see anybody else until another month has passed. Without his collie such a shepherd must be utterly lonely unless the sight of red-deer, golden eagle, or wild-cat, can give him any sense of companionship.

"SEEDLEY SELECT."

Winner of five first prizes. Owner, Mr. R. H. Lord.

In the summer-time, when these men bring their flocks from the remote hill farms to the market towns, they enjoy the hospitality of the farmhouses they reach at nightfall. While shooting over a friend's place in Scotland some years ago, I went to take tea in a farmhouse at a moment when

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three shepherds had made their appearance there on the way to a sheep fair to be held two days later at a country town. They were all sturdy men, who looked as if it would be hard to fix a limit to their physical endurance, but there was not one of them able to do more than answer a question in monosyllables. One and all had seemingly lost the use of their tongues; the sound of the human voice distressed them. Towards evening, as we were going home, one of these men was collecting his sheep, which had strayed through broken hurdles in the field allotted to them. He gave his collie a few instructions, and it started off at high speed, turned the flock back into its own domains, and, without the least hesitation or uncertainty, went after the two or three that had strayed into a neighbour's flock. Sometimes the shepherd waved his hand by way of direction, sometimes he gave a shrill whistle, but after his first direction he never spoke, and the business could not have been accomplished more rapidly. In fact, one might have been pardoned for thinking that some of the intelligence that belongs under ordinary circumstances to a man had passed from the shepherd to his dog, for there was no hesitation in picking out the sheep that had strayed, though the flock into which they had run were of the same breed. When the collie came panting back, his task completed, he was rewarded with a careless pat on the head, and this seemed to satisfy him completely.

In the south country, a friend of mine possessed a collie of extraordinary sagacity. One night in the summer, while walking over his land, he found the heat too great and left his light overcoat on the hedge. By the time he reached his house, some distance away, he remembered he had forgotten to take the coat up again. He turned to the collie who had been his companion during the stroll, took off the coat he was wearing to show him what was wanted, and then told him to go back and watch over the other one, intending to send a lad down a little later. Something occurred in the house to distract his attention, and he thought no more about the matter until the following morning, when he made haste to return to the meadow, and found his collie sitting patiently by the side of the overcoat, from which he had not stirred all night.

Incidents of this kind abound among the most serious owners of collies, a class of men and women not given to exaggeration. All testify to the faith and sagacity of a dog that has been rather unfairly criticised by those whose knowledge of its habits is imperfect. There are many who charge collies with treachery, although the worst that can be said about them is that they resent the unauthorised attentions of strangers, and do not respond readily to people who wish to be exceedingly friendly at short notice. Moreover, they are good watch-dogs, and no good watch-dog is given to encouraging familiarity. The dog that is everybody's friend is nobody's servant. Our music-halls testify to the fact that the collie can be taught a number of tricks; but as most of these tricks serve no useful purpose of any kind, there is little to commend in this form of training, which does no more than afford a few moments' amusement to an unthinking crowd. It would be far more useful to develop the intelligence of the animal along the lines that will be most useful to a reasonable master—to make it, if possible, an even better

"CALDER BANK SPECIAL."

Winner of first prize at Cruft's Dog Show at Islington. Owner, Mr. H Harrison.

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sheep-dog and guardian of the house than it already is. Unfortunately, the tendency to pervert Nature's intentions is one of the most striking features of latter-day clubs that cultivate bird or beast, and it is to be feared that the show bench is quite as responsible as the music-hall for many of these perversions in the world of dogs, and that it has less excuse to advance. The music-hall showman desires to live, and in considering his ambition, the fact that we do not always see the necessity for his continued existence may be overlooked. A few irresponsible people make up their minds that a dog would look better if its shape were modified; they do not pause to ask themselves whether such a modification is natural or the reverse. They will not even bring about modification on lines that will make their victim a better worker. They just seek to ensure the changes that appeal to the eye, and so, in the case of the collie, we find the head has been lengthened for purposes that can have nothing to do with the uses for which a collie is designed, although the long head is undoubtedly an advantage from the merely ornamental point of view, and other changes that might be noted follow on the same lines. It is to be feared that so long as people set up a standard of points that is not based upon utility, and so long as the winners of the best prizes can command a very big price, dogs will suffer from developments that ignore their chief use.

We may take it that the collie had been brought to a state not far removed from perfection, having regard only to its duties as a sheep-dog, by countless generations of careful breeding in the North in years when dog clubs were quite unknown.

SMOOTH-COATED CHAMPION "EASTWOOD EXTRA."

Winner of two first prizes and special prize for best dog in the show at the Southern Collie Club Show. Owner, Mr. R. G. Howson.

It is said by some of the old Highland shepherds that, in days long past, when poaching was not limited to grouse and deer, and the sheep-stealer achieved a comfortable competence until or unless the gallows brought him to an untimely end, the collie was the most reliable servant he had. Every sheep thief could depend upon a well-trained collie to pick up stragglers or even to bring one or two out of an unprotected flock, and to do his work promptly and quietly. I have been told by more than one aged Highland shepherd that when a sheep-stealer went to prison in the good old days of their

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fathers and grandfathers, those who were dependent upon him could be sure of quite a good sum of money if they would but consent to part with the dog. It may well be that some of the proudest tenants of the modern show bench would show descent from a sheep-stealing generation if their pedigree travelled back far enough. Happily for their reputation, sheep-stealing was already a thing of the past when the Collie Club was founded in the early 'eighties.

The cult of the collie has taken a strong hold upon the public, and there are very

SMOOTH-COATED CHAMPION "STOCKPORT BLUE BLOSSOM."

Winner of first prize at the Southern Collie Club Show. Owner, Mr. H. Harrison.

many famous specimens to be seen to-day at the great shows. The late Mr. Panmure Gordon, who had so many dogs, included some striking collies in his collection. Mr. Pierpont Morgan is another very successful owner, and some years ago Queen Victoria was to be reckoned among successful exhibitors. But it must not be forgotten that nearly all prize dogs would be beaten in open competition at sheep trials. Their ears may be better, their forelegs straighter, their backs shorter, and their coats immensely superior to those of their workaday cousins of the wild border countries, but when it comes to the work for which practical men must rely upon their collies, there is very little doubt about the dog that will come out first. It will not be the artificially lengthened one, but the dog whose shape has been fixed by Nature for the work she wishes him to do, the dog trained to endurance from the time when he was picked out of his mother's litter as the one best fitted to survive, and trained with more care than kindness for the tasks before him.

The collie most in favour among shepherds and farmers in the north country is the bearded collie, which looks like a long-tailed English sheep-dog, and, as far as my experience goes, is so devoted to his duties and his rightful owner that he regards the rest of humanity with suspicion. He is a rough-looking fellow at best, whose shabby and shaggy appearance would earn the contempt of his more pampered but less able cousins of the show bench. It is likely that the more ornamental dogs will have lost most of their early instincts in the course of a few generations. At the sheep-dog trials, still an annual feature of rural life in remote corners of the country, the

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bearded collie can hold his own against all competitors of his own family, and other sheep-dogs will find him hard to beat.

The bearded collie is not taken very seriously in clubland, where rough and smooth collies divide the attention and admiration of the breeders. There is a Rough Collie Club and a Smooth Collie Club, but the two sorts are so closely connected that you may find a puppy of one sort in a litter of the other. An examination of the points by which both varieties are judged shows how closely they are related.

In each case the eyes should be almond-shaped and set obliquely in the head. The ears of rough collies and smooth must be small and sensitive, thrown back in repose and half erect when the dog's attention is attracted. A long and arching neck is required from both species, each must have the back long, the loin arched, the chest deep. The legs must be straight, long, and muscular, the coat very dense, and the under-coat abundant. The standard height is the same for both, bitches being about two inches shorter than dogs, the average height being twenty-two inches to twenty-four inches for the latter. The points are revised from time to time by those who exercise a controlling voice in the clubs.

The likeness that the bearded collie bears to the old English sheep-dog, from which it differs chiefly in not being bob-tailed, has been commented upon already. Opinions as to the origin of the bearded variety differ considerably. Some think that it is a reversion to one side of the parental line, while others hold that it is product of the union of an old English sheep-dog and a collie. The point is not worth labouring, because we cannot hope to solve the problem. Suffice it that while rough and smooth collies are becoming domestic pets, the bearded variety—cross-grained and ill-tempered though he be—is undoubtedly doing excellent work in the Scottish Highlands as a sheep-dog pure and simple. But for his services, the toll that the snowstorm takes, when it comes suddenly to hillsides where the sheep are straying, would be very considerably augmented. While rough and smooth collies will respond in some fashion, however slight, to the advances of their master's friends, the bearded collie, so far as my experience goes, acknowledges none save his master, and will even bark or growl at other members of the family. He seems restless and unhappy in the house, but as soon as his foot is on the hills, he is a different dog, with a sense of responsibility that is quite unmistakable. His are none of the graces belonging to his cousins, the rough and smooth collies, but in the Scottish Highlands graces are a little out of harmony with surroundings, and the plaided shepherd "blowing of his nails" is quite happily associated with the rough, surly, bearded collie.

TOUCHSTONE AND AUDREY.

THE dowagers behind their fans
All wonder what I see in her;
If envy could forbid the banns,
Ours until Doomsday they'd defer.

"My dear, her eyes are simply green!"
"Her hair is golden? Once 'twas red!"
Thus vials of envenomed spleen
They pour in whispers on her head.

But for their sneers I nothing care,
Laugh to the echo at their spite;
Let them abuse her eyes, her hair—
I've got her heart, and *that's* all right!

ERNEST BLAKE.

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THE GREAT REWARD.

By ALAN J. THOMPSON.

THE Honourable Mrs. Preece-Allwyn was famous for her dinner-parties, and the gathering in her drawing-room at Eaton Place, on a certain evening in January, was as brilliant as usual. Darencourt, however, from the comparative retirement of a window recess, regarded the fashionable assemblage with critical cynicism. Eight years' exile in the wilderness had left him somewhat intolerant of the veneer of civilisation, and there was genuine contempt in the glance that rested on a group of elegantly-gowned ladies.

"And these are the kind of women—overdressed and underclothed, chattering dolls—for whom Leyland, Warbrooke, and hundreds of other equally good fellows, fling away their lives! Pah, what fools men are! Sacrificing everything to satisfy the vanity of these creatures! Ninety per cent. of us are blind to the inordinate selfishness of the 'fair' sex. They're all alike, these society sirens, only some of them manage to disguise their gospel of self better than others. More accomplished actresses, that's all."

Darencourt's strong mouth curved bitterly as his thoughts sped back to the girl who had jilted him eight years ago for an elderly brewer whose wealth was as vast as his vulgarity.

"A merciful deliverance, I suppose," he mused, "yet at the time I——"

His mordant reflections were disturbed by Major Bramleigh, who bore down upon him with gleaming monocle and second-best smirk.

"So you are going to settle down in the old country now, eh?" queried the celebrated quidnunc, when they had exchanged greetings.

"Yes," replied Darencourt, "I hope so."

"The best thing, too. *You* have sowed a pretty luxuriant crop of wild oats, my son."

"True, Major, and reaped the harvest."

"Ah," rejoined Bramleigh, shrugging his shoulders, "we all get our harvest."

The cloud on his plump, pink face passed in a moment, and he surveyed the animated scene before him complacently.

"Funny thing," he said, "how this Preece-Allwyn woman musters all the *élite*. A great show to-night, Darencourt, isn't it?"

"It's certainly a bigger gathering than I expected," was the non-committal response.

"But that's no excuse for keeping back dinner like this. Jove, it's a quarter past! And we're only waiting for that fellow Palgrave."

"Who's he?" asked Darencourt carelessly, wondering how seldom his ubiquitous companion dined at his own expense.

"Palgrave? Haven't you met him? One of these confounded *nouveaux riches*—swimming in money—goes everywhere, and always turns up late to make an 'entrance.' Infernal cheek, I call it!"

The Major gave his concave waistcoat a vicious jerk.

"If I had my way," he added, "I'd see these parvenus——"

"Mr. Ernest Palgrave!" announced a megaphonic footman.

"Ugh!" grunted Bramleigh. "At last! Fine-looking chap, though, isn't he?"

Darencourt leant forward a little as Palgrave—a tall, massive man of about forty, with bronze hair—advanced, limping slightly, to greet his hostess.

"Ought to have been in the old Fourteenth, or—— Good Heavens, man, what's up?"

Darencourt had started so violently that the Major was alarmed.

"Nothing," was the quick reply—"nothing."

"Well, you look pretty sick on it. Touch of ague, eh?"

"Not exactly. A—just a grain of the harvest, Major."

"Oh!" said the soldier, staring curiously at his companion's impassive countenance. "Rather a sharp grain, I should think. Better keep off the Heidsieck to-night, my lad. Ah, there's dinner!"

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He trotted away, and Darencourt, too, rose to seek his partner.

The lady proved to be a stout dowager, who was far more interested in her dinner than in Darencourt, and as his other neighbour was absorbed by the gossip of her *vis-à-vis*, the returned exile was left to his own devices. This immunity from small-talk was particularly welcome, as it enabled him to make a thorough scrutiny of the man whose appearance had been so severe a shock—Palgrave—clearly discernible between two epergnes a short distance away.

Palgrave! It was not the name. *That*, however, was easily changed. He had found an alias useful himself on more than one occasion. The mouth, though—rather an ugly mouth, in spite of the heavy, fair moustache—was familiar. And the limp? Yes, it must be the—— But, no, it was impossible! Here in London? A coincidence, but impossible. And yet—and yet——

As he meditated, Darencourt was listening subconsciously to the conversation, which, on the arrival of the sweets, had become general.

"And I think," said the Home Secretary, concluding a personal experience, "a man like that, who will deny his religion and his nationality for a handful of gold, is the—well, absolutely despicable. But it is a mournful truth how low men will sink for money."

Darencourt became suddenly alert. Leaning forward, he caught the Minister's eye.

"That is so," he asserted. "I can give you a remarkable instance, if you would care to hear it."

"By all means," rejoined the statesman, regarding the speaker's deeply-tanned face with interest.

"The incident happened in Australia," said Darencourt; and although he looked straight at the Home Secretary, he was aware that Palgrave had lowered his wine-glass in the act of drinking. "Four men prospecting for gold formed a little syndicate. They struck out a fresh trail north of the Gonda Plain. It was rough going, and they looked death close in the face more than once before they 'struck it lucky.' But when they did so, it was a rich find, and easily worked. They got a big pile fairly quickly, although not before they were all craving for civilisation. Before starting the return journey to Sydney it was decided that there should be a complete share-out of the gold, so that each man should carry back his own fortune."

Still directly addressing the statesman, Darencourt was conscious that he commanded the general interest, and that one man in particular was hanging on every word.

"They met in the hut for that purpose," he went on quietly, "and one of the men, the leader, drugged the coffee. I suppose the drug was not so deadly as he had expected, because he made some excuse to step outside the hut. Then he—it's not a very pleasant narrative, I'm afraid—then he shot them through the window. Shot them—his pards—in cold blood, and appropriated all the gold. He killed two of them."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the Home Secretary. "Monstrous! But, you will excuse me, sir, are you sure of your facts?"

"Perfectly sure. As a matter of fact, I had the story"—Darencourt made a scarcely perceptible pause—"from the survivor. He told me that——"

Darencourt came to a sudden halt. There was a slight commotion. Mr. Ernest Palgrave had been unfortunate enough to snap the stem of his wine-glass, and the champagne was dripping dangerously near a costly velvet dress. An alert footman came to the rescue, and Mrs. Preece-Allwyn, dismissing Palgrave's apologies with a smile, begged Darencourt to proceed.

"I was merely going to add," he explained, "that the man who survived only did so after a long and critical illness. I remember—it is rather curious—that when he did recover, he found that his aversion for coffee was so intense that he could never drink a mouthful of it."

"And do you mean to say that inhuman scoundrel got clear with the gold?" asked Major Bramleigh. "He did? Scandalous! What were the police doing?"

"Couldn't say, I'm sure. But I don't think he was ever caught; he covered his tracks too cleverly."

"And the survivor?" queried Palgrave's partner.

"Oh, he went to Mexico," Darencourt answered carelessly. "Wanted to forget the whole affair, I believe."

"Not surprising," commented an eminent traveller. "One of the worst cases of gold greed I've ever heard. Reminds me of Stanley Pillhan. That was in Colorado in '82."

The traveller launched into his narrative, and Darencourt relapsed into polite attention. He had not been mistaken.

Soon after the ladies had withdrawn,

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Palgrave approached him with an agreeable smile.

"Good yarn of yours, sir," he said affably. "I suppose you know Australia."

"Well, I've done a little sheep-farming in New Zealand," Darencourt replied, meeting the other's searching gaze without flinching, confident that his changed and beardless face was safe from recognition.

"Ah," was the reply, "I know New Zealand. I have——"

"Coffee, sir?"

As Palgrave turned to the servant and took a cup, Darencourt shook his head; then, recognising the *faux pas*, he also lifted a cup from the tray before his companion had perceived the negative motion. He began to talk smoothly of New Zealand, and Palgrave, quite unsuspicious, followed the lead until he was beckoned away by his host. Rejoining Darencourt a few minutes later, he noticed that the former's coffee cup was empty. Its contents were astonishing the roots of an adjacent fern.

The adjournment to the drawing-room was made early, but it was past midnight before Darencourt discovered that Marion Cormac was among the guests. Immediately he saw her, he was carried back to the solitary year of real enjoyment life had afforded him—the remote period of *dolce far niente* spent as the favoured guest of Marion's parents. He had often recalled that tranquil epoch in Tairloch, and that time of trouble, more recent, when Lady Cormac had been the only person who had not refused him hospitality nor denied him help and sympathy.

Latterly embitterment had clouded that memory, but the sight of Marion revived it. He remembered, too, with mingled pain and amusement, that in those days the girl had raised him to a heroic pedestal and worshipped him.

To-night Miss Cormac, like the rest of Darencourt's former acquaintances, did not recognise in the lean, grim-visaged man the gallant scapegrace of eight years ago, until he disclosed his identity. Then, however, there was no doubt about the sincerity of her welcome or the friendly light in her dark grey eyes. She was accompanied by her aunt, and, as they were on the point of departure, conversation was brief. But Marion found time to obtain Darencourt's promise to call on her mother and herself during the week.

The girl's serene beauty affected the wanderer with a sense of refreshment, and he felt an involuntary sensation of real pleasure that his stressful career was unsmirched by any episode which would have debarred him from meeting her clear eyes easily.

Mrs. Preece-Allwyn rejected his proffered farewell.

"Going, Mr. Darencourt?" she exclaimed. "Please don't say that. Why, it's quite early! We are just going to settle down to a cosy chat round the fire. Hasn't Marion Cormac become a beauty?"

"Yes. I don't think she looks at all well, though."

"No? Perhaps not. No doubt the excitement of her engagement accounts for that."

"Engagement?"

"Yes. Didn't she tell you? Quite the catch of the season! She's engaged to Mr. Ernest Palgrave. Enormously rich, you know. It's just been announced. Isn't she a lucky girl?"

"I hope so," replied Darencourt heavily. "She used to be a very charming one."

"Very. Well, come along, Mr. Darencourt. You must have some bouillion or something before you go."

Darencourt walked slowly to his chambers in St. James's Street. He was depressed and uneasy. The news of Marion's engagement aroused most painful thoughts. He would not have believed it possible that she would have suffered even this man's friendship—a man not only bad in every way, and utterly unprincipled—but worse—far, far worse. Marion's husband! Why, the scoundrel was not fit to enter the same room! What possible attraction could he have for her, unless—ye gods!—his money? So that was it. Again! Another woman lost to all sense of the fitness of things—so greedy for the selfish pleasures of life that she could descend to receive them from a—from Palgrave. What a sordid, contemptible world it was!

Once again Darencourt recalled the woman who had jilted him, and the gloom on his countenance intensified.

"Self, self," he muttered bitterly, "from Eve onward! Well, I shan't let it trouble *me*."

He shrugged his shoulders, but his heart was very heavy.

* * * * *

At the earliest opportunity Darencourt called at the Cormacs' house in Wilton Gardens. Although he was reluctant to see Marion—now hopelessly degraded in his eyes—again, yet he felt that the possibilities

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attached to her engagement made the matter far too serious to be altogether neglected. Besides, he would have hastened in any case to renew his acquaintanceship with her mother.

Lady Cormac, however, was out, and he found Marion alone in the old-fashioned drawing-room. As he approached her, Darencourt noticed that her pallor was even more marked than at their former meeting, and that there was a subtle quality in her manner which he could not analyse.

"How do you do?" he said stiffly, in response to her cordial greeting. "I am sorry not to find Lady Cormac at home."

"Yes, it *is* a pity," assented Marion. "Mother has gone with Donald to Hurlingham; but she will be back to dinner, and if you would care to join us, she would be awfully pleased."

"Thank you. I am afraid I cannot do that. I have——"

Darencourt was interrupted by the sudden entrance of a tall, fair young fellow in a state of evident excitement, flushed and a little breathless.

"Stuart," exclaimed the girl with surprise, and it seemed to Darencourt with trepidation, "I thought you had gone to the Jellicoes'?"

"I was going," the new-comer answered, "but I've been upset. I met that beast Palgrave!"

"Stuart"—Miss Cormac flushed painfully—"you forget yourself! And do you not see Mr. Darencourt?"

"How d'you do, Mr. Darencourt?" muttered Stuart, with a curt nod. "I don't forget myself at all, Marion, and I'm not going to be played with. I'm not a bally schoolboy now. Palgrave tells me you are engaged to him. Is that true? I want a straight answer, please, *now*. Is it true?"

The young man had lowered his suppressed voice, but every word was audible to Darencourt, who had strolled to the window and stood looking out. There was a brief silence.

Stuart ran to his sister and caught her roughly by the arm.

"You don't answer!" he exclaimed angrily. "You—— Marion, then it's true!"

"Stuart, Stuart, will you be quiet?" entreated the girl.

"No, by Heavens, I won't! You're engaged to that cad Palgrave, and you're ashamed to admit it! Bah, I know now—I know the reason! We've got our dear brother to thank for this, too! Hasn't he made enough mischief already?"

"Stuart, will you——"

"No, I won't be muffled. This is Donald's work. Sir Donald! A nice head of the house, isn't he? This—this disgrace—— I wish father was alive. I wish—— Marion, I won't have it! You're selling yourself for Donald! You are——"

"Stuart!"

There was a note in that cry which checked the speaker in the full tide of his passionate tirade, which made the man by the window turn involuntarily—a note instinct with tragedy—and in the silence which ensued Darencourt understood the meaning of the expression in the girl's countenance which had baffled him. She took her brother's arm and drew him close to the door. She whispered something to him. Darencourt could not hear a word, but he saw the young man's head droop, heard him murmur his sister's name in a curious manner, saw him make a helpless gesture, and then—he was alone with Marion.

The girl came to him at once. Her face was composed, but she was white to the lips.

"I am sorry—so sorry," she said, "that this should happen to-day—before you."

Her words confirmed Darencourt's assumption that she had been dreading this scene with her young brother, and increased his growing belief that his theories with regard to Marion Cormac's engagement were not so sound as he had imagined. He determined to test them decisively.

"I am sorry, too," he said smoothly, "if my presence has distressed you. Your brother, however, has reminded me that I have been very remiss. I have not congratulated you on your engagement."

Marion turned away her head.

"Thank you," she responded in a low voice.

"Yes," pursued Darencourt—there should be no relenting—"and I hear the—er—circumstances are particularly auspicious. It seems you are a much-to-be-envied personage now, eh?"

The girl did not answer, and Darencourt, his eyes on her drooping countenance, saw her lips quiver.

"Miss Cormac," he said, with a sudden change of manner, "I think we can do without any more of this mockery. For you to be engaged—— For Palgrave—— Pshaw, there is something behind this! The thing is wrong—it is bad!"

"You have—you have no right to speak to me like this, Mr. Darencourt," protested Marion, with a poor pretence at hauteur. "You——"

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"No right but the right of a very old friend. No, I refuse to fence. I want to know the truth. I want to know what is forcing you into the arms of this man?"

Darencourt had chosen his words deliberately, and they achieved their full effect. The girl caught her breath and shuddered.

"Come," he persisted, "you *must* tell me. I may be able to help you."

For a little while she regarded him fixedly, her hands pressed to her heart. Already shaken at the sight of his strong, resolute face, her determination to withhold her confidence collapsed.

"Very well," she said slowly. "I will tell you if—but you must promise you will not speak—you will not approach my mother or my brothers in any way about my—about this?"

Darencourt promised her, and she told him the pitiful story—how her brother, Sir Donald Cormac, by a course of wild folly and dissipation, had not only saddled the estates with heavy debts, but had seriously jeopardised his honour and the honour of the family; how Palgrave—whose determined advances she had repulsed for more than a year—had schemed until he held the credit and the fair fame of the Cormacs at his mercy; how she, to save her brother and her mother—"it would have broken her heart, Mr. Darencourt, if she had known"—had promised to marry the man from whom she shrank; how Palgrave had lavishly fulfilled his part of the bargain, and how she was prepared to discharge her debt.

Darencourt listened in silence, and when she had finished, he made no comment on her proposed self-sacrifice, but he looked steadily at her, and the expression in his eyes made any words superfluous.

"Thank you," he said quietly. "I thank you most earnestly, Miss Cormac. But you must not suffer this—it is impossible! There must be some way out."

"There is none," she answered. "I have pledged my word."

Her tragic resignation, and the thought of all it involved, stung the man into sudden passion.

"No," he cried hotly—"no, it must not be! I—— It is horrible—cruel! You don't realise, you don't know what this man is."

With a strong effort he checked himself, drawing back like a man on the edge of a fatal abyss. What madness was he contemplating? It would be madness to tell her. After all, he might—he might be powerless to help, and then her torture would be ten thousand times worse.

The pause was only momentary.

"This man," he finished, "is totally unfit, totally unworthy to be your husband. You *must* know it."

"Yes," murmured the girl, "I am afraid I do." She turned from him and went to the window. There was a profound hush, and then her low voice came to him with a strange undernote: "I shall admit that to no one else. But I want *you* to know—I want *you* to understand."

"Yes, yes," he rejoined quickly, "I do. And I swear I will help you. Let me think—let me think!"

"No, please don't; it will be better to forget. You cannot help me. No one can, I"—she smiled piteously—"I must 'dree my own weird.' Ah!"

The exclamation was one almost of terror. Darencourt ran to her side.

"Marion," he cried, unconsciously using her name as of old, "what is it? What is the matter?"

The girl shrugged her slender shoulders, and motioned towards the street.

"Mr. Palgrave," she said, "is coming here now."

Darencourt, following her gaze, saw her lover approaching the house, very briskly in spite of his limp. A curious chill possessed him; he felt as though that advancing form was ruthless Fate incarnate. The sensation was quite evanescent, and a moment later he was speaking calmly to his companion.

"Miss Cormac," he said, "I want you to let me have a quarter of an hour with this—this fellow—alone. I may be able to do something."

"But I cannot—it would be useless."

"But you must! No, don't shake your head! You *must!* Ten—five minutes!"

"Very well—a few minutes. I will go to my room. But I must come down soon. Oh, Mr. Darencourt, be careful, for all our sakes!"

With one swift glance at his stern, purposeful face, she hurried from the room.

Darencourt, seating himself on the broad window ledge, endeavoured to concentrate his tumultuous thoughts on the difficulties of the situation. He had little time to do so, for a few moments later Palgrave was shown in.

"If you will wait here, sir, please," said the maid, "Miss Cormac will be down very soon."

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"Thanks. Tell her I'm rather pressed for time, will you?"

Palgrave, fashionably dressed, sleek and handsome, advanced towards the fire, a smile widening his mouth. At the sight of him, Darencourt felt a sudden sense of physical nausea. This grinning scoundrel, who had duped them all so cunningly, was fattening now on the fruits of his foul crime, while Hartley and Mainwaring—— The picture of that death-encumbered hut in the lonely waste of Kulgorrie came to him with unexampled distinctness. It faded, and with it passed his sickness, giving place to a cold fury which drove all thought but that of vengeance from his mind.

"Good afternoon," he said, coming forward a little, and taking care to keep his hands behind him.

"How d'you do, Mr. ——? Let me see—met you at old Preece-Allwyn's, didn't I?"

"Before that," rejoined Darencourt, coming very close to Palgrave and looking him straight in the eyes.

"Indeed?" said the other, frowning perplexedly.

"Yes. We met some time ago at Kulgorrie, Seth Worrell."

Palgrave reeled back before the quietly-spoken words as if Darencourt had struck him in the face.

"Talbot!" he gasped.

His right hand flew to his hip, then fell, opening and closing convulsively.

"No," said Darencourt, smiling grimly. "No shooting irons here, Mr. Worrell."

Palgrave — to give him his latest pseudonym — moistened his white lips and shaped them into the ghastly semblance of a smile.

"I thought," he muttered, "I thought—"

"You thought, you murderous devil—you thought you had done your work better!" Darencourt snapped out, his rage gaining ascendancy. "You thought you had butchered me like those other poor fellows. You thought you were safe, didn't you? You've had a long run, but it's come to an end—at last."

"Ah," ejaculated Palgrave, drawing a deep breath, "I suppose—it has!" His colour was rapidly returning, and there was a gleam in his downcast eyes unperceived by his furious companion. "And what are you going to do now?"

"Send you to the gallows, Seth Worrell."

Palgrave began to laugh softly. "Not so fast, sonny," he said. "Seems to me you're making a big mistake. My name is Palgrave—Mr. Ernest Palgrave, of New York and London. I don't know why you want to call me anything else. I don't know anything about Kulgorrie. I've never been in Australia all my life. I've got—I can find plenty of witnesses to *that*, my own sister among 'em. I've only seen you once before, Mr. Darencourt, but I know a good deal about you. You've led a wild, blackguardly life. You've been sent out of this country; you've had a severe illness abroad—brain fever. Quite changed your appearance, you know, and affected your brain, too. You're subject to strange hallucinations. You actually mistake one of the wealthiest and most respectable members of London society for one of your desperado friends, and now you want to accuse him of some lurid crime of six years ago, almost buried in oblivion—even in Australia. It won't do, my dear old pard. I'm too strong for you. You've no proof—not a rotten little shred of proof—no evidence, no witnesses. Try it and see. You'll be laughed at for a lunatic. It's no go, friend Talbot. If you're not careful, I'll have damages for libel. Savvy? Thought I was cornered, didn't you? Well, I'm *not!*"

It was true. Darencourt realised that as clearly as he realised that his mistimed burst of anger was a grievous mistake—a mistake almost certain to be fatal to his plans. Not only had he forgotten Marion's warning, but he had lost sight of the fact that he was dealing with no ordinary scoundrel, but with a consummately clever criminal. "No evidence—no witnesses!" It was the truth. Hartley and Mainwaring had been shot dead, and when he—Darencourt—after a long illness, had struggled from Kulgorrie to Sydney, belated efforts to trace the murderer were naturally unavailing, although Hartley's relatives had left no stone unturned to help him avenge the crime. His own narrative—the confused and incomplete evidence of a man more dead than alive—had been a poor help, and although his remembrance was a little clearer now than it had been six years ago, it was too feeble a weapon to damage Palgrave, actively on guard. Darencourt knew it, and although he tried to conceal his discomfiture, he saw from the other's insolent triumph that the effort was useless.

"So my 'run' isn't at an end, you see," added his adversary, straddling before the fire. "On the contrary, my friend, I'm still going very strong. Just about to marry

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a particularly charmin' girl, and have a happy honeymoon—probably in Australia."

Darencourt winced, but this time controlled his anger.

"We shall see," he said quietly.

"Yes," agreed Palgrave, his mockery changing suddenly to fierce menace. "But remember this, sonny, if you try any more of your hanky-panky tricks, I'll—I'll put your light out, by Heaven, I will! Don't forget that!"

"We shall see," Darencourt rejoined, in the same repressed voice, raising it as he heard the door open behind him. "Of course, we are all liable to mistakes. Ah, Miss Cormac, how do you do? I was just telling Mr. Palgrave that I thought he was an old acquaintance. He tells me I am mistaken. I am sorry Lady Cormac is out. Please convey my regrets, will you, and tell her I hope to be more fortunate another time. I mustn't stay now," he added, moving towards the door; "I have to meet a friend. Good afternoon, Mr. Palgrave; I'm sorry I was mistaken."

"Don't mention it, sir, don't mention it!" responded the other man pleasantly. "It's of no consequence. Good day to you."

Marion, murmuring some conventional regrets, walked to the door with Darencourt, and in that short space of time the man suffered intensely. He had failed; he had no comfort, no hope to give this ill-starred, tortured woman, and the thought was agony. The reckless haste which had so often proved a curse to him in the past had reasserted itself with disastrous effect, but now he was not alone in suffering the penalty. He knew that one swift glance at his face had dispelled what hopes she had cherished; he knew it from the weary droop of her sweet lips, from the sombre tragedy of her eyes, and his heart was heavy indeed.

Even then, however, her brave spirit bore her up.

"Thank you so much for coming," she said cheerfully, and smiled at him. "Good-bye."

Darencourt understood the hidden significance of those words and of that smile. He remembered them to the end of his life.

"Good-bye," he rejoined. It seemed useless to say any more, yet as for one brief moment he held her hand, he, too, smiled, adding beneath his breath: "Courage, Marion, courage!"

Darencourt did not sleep that night. He sat by his bedroom window, looking out on the starry night. He seemed to have lived years in that one short winter's day. He knew that he loved Marion Cormac, and that she—— She had said: "I want *you* to know, I want *you* to understand." In saying these words, Darencourt realised now that she had told him that her girlish love for him had not faded, but had been cherished all these years, to reveal itself now when all hope of earthly fulfilment had gone.

Her face, pale and mournful, rose before him, and while he vowed to save her, if it cost him his life, Palgrave's words throbbed with torturing persistence in his brain: "No evidence—no witnesses!"

* * * * *

The night was very still, and as Marion drove up to the house, she heard a church clock strike nine. The sound caused her to reflect how few were the hours that would be proclaimed before she became Palgrave's wife. They were to be married the following morning.

To-morrow! The thought evoked little emotion. Marion had suffered so intensely during the last three months that it seemed now that her capacity for suffering was exhausted. She believed and hoped it was so. In any case, she was resigned—quite resigned to the inevitable. After all, it was a common enough ordeal. Hundreds of women made loveless marriages, and she, who had endured so much, could surely endure that. There was no choice in the matter. She was prepared to submit.

Palgrave met her in the hall. His eyes lingered on her beauty, and as he placed a caressing hand on her shoulder, he whispered: "To-morrow, sweetheart!"

While she shrank beneath his touch, Marion realised that her feelings were, after all, far from atrophied, and that nothing could lessen her aversion to the man who was to be her husband—the man whose brutal nature no elaborate veneer had been able to conceal from her eyes. A wave of repulsion passed through her and she shivered.

"You are cold, dear," said Palgrave. "Be quick and come into the warm."

Marion nodded, and was following the maid towards the hall, when a loud burst of laughter and applause became audible. She stopped and looked questioningly at Palgrave.

"One of Leclerque's little monologues," he explained, with a shade of embarrassment in his manner. "I'm afraid it's a bigger rally than we agreed on, Marion. But it's not my fault. Agatha is so mad about your

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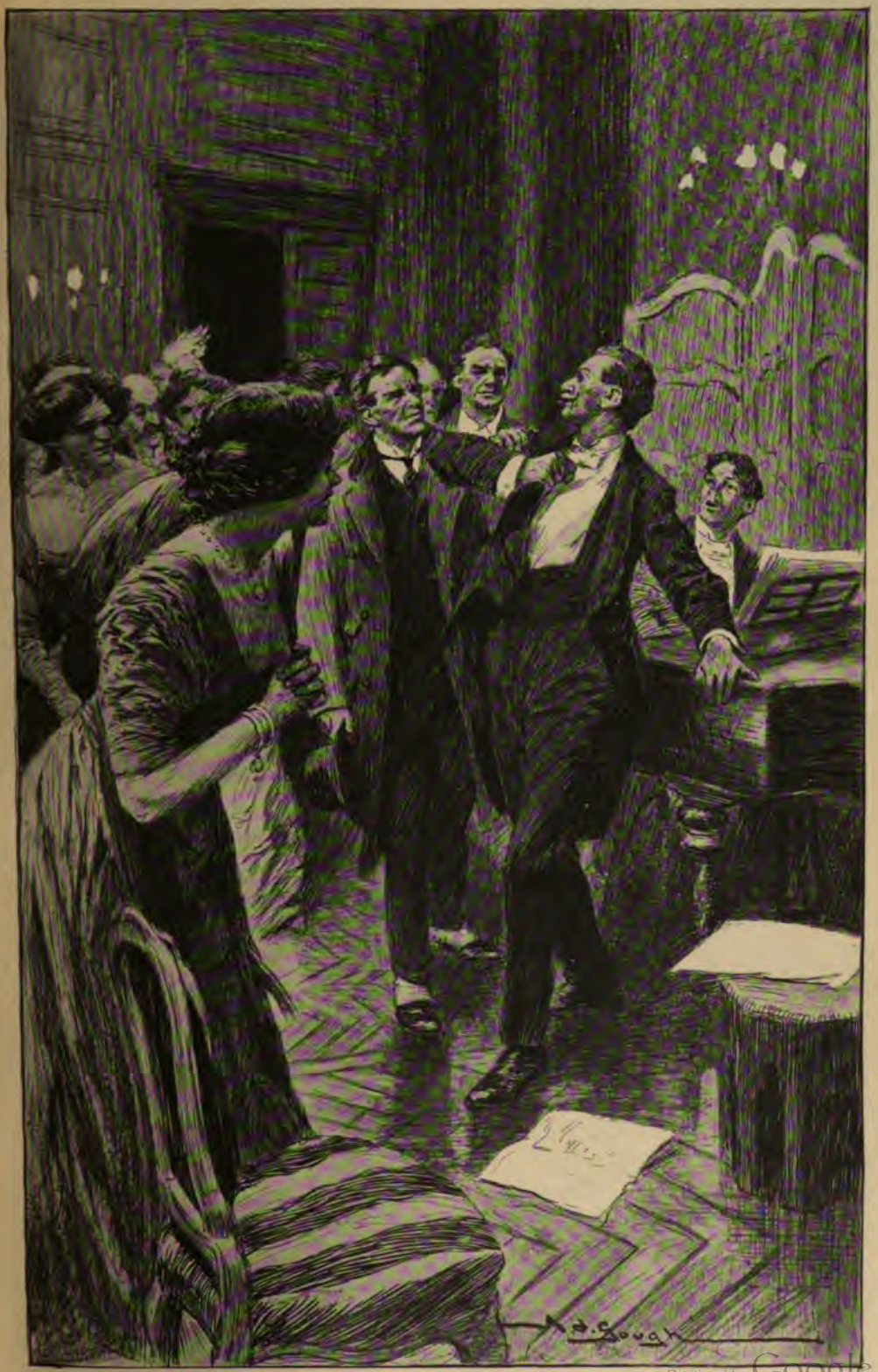

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"'Take your hand away!' he said fiercely."

insisting on such a tame show to-morrow that she made up her mind to ask quite a crowd of her friends to-night. I couldn't stop her. You know what Agatha is."

Marion knew Palgrave had broken his promise, and that his sister was no more accountable for this "bigger rally" than she was. Agatha Palgrave was a fast, conceited woman, handsome in a bold style, who lived only for gaiety and excitement, and seemed to dread nothing more than her own society. She was the acknowledged and capable leader of a smart, racy set of ultra-fashionables, but, where her brother was concerned, she had no more will than a puppet. She was his slave—his willing, admiring slave. Miss Palgrave was a nervous woman in spite of her natural effrontery, and Marion had often wondered if there was some secret trouble shadowing her life.

As for Palgrave's disregard of her own wishes, the girl recognised the futility of any reproach. Without any audible rejoinder, she left him and accompanied the maid upstairs. If she was to meet a crowd of people she disliked, she had no intention of whimpering about it. She would probably have to undergo worse ordeals.

This particular ordeal, however, proved to be less irksome than she expected. The majority of the company proved to be far more interested in the absurdities of Monsieur and Madame Leclerque than in to-morrow's pale, weary-looking bride, and, after a score or so of introductions, Marion was permitted to retire to the comparative seclusion of a recess near the door.

She had been apathetically watching the animated assembly from her retreat for nearly an hour, when she noticed Palgrave's butler standing in the doorway, striving to attract his master's attention. His efforts being unsuccessful, he at length threaded his way through the noisy crowd to where Palgrave was standing, and spoke to him. Palgrave received the message with evident anger, and Marion saw him flush darkly, although she was too far away to hear what was said.

As the butler, dismissed with a curt gesture, passed her, the girl perceived a very perturbed expression on his smooth face, and she also noticed that Agatha Palgrave had turned from a little group near the piano, and was watching the incident anxiously.

A few seconds later, Palgrave, who had been frowning at the carpet, hurried after the servant. When he returned, he was still frowning. His sister met him near the door and spoke to him in a low voice. Her words were inaudible to Marion, but she heard the man's reply: "To-night, too! I told him, if he didn't leave the house at once, I'd give him a taste of my horsewhip and kick him down the steps! Curse his insolence!"

Palgrave's voice shook with repressed anger, and his sister put her hand on his wrist.

"Hush!" she murmured warningly. "Be careful, Ernest! What did he say? Are you sure you were—wise?"

"Wise? Bah, of course I was! I've stopped his tricks! Nearly frightened him out of his skin. There'll be no more trouble in that quarter. The skunk! I know his game. That's enough, Agatha—we shall be noticed."

With an assumption of amusement, he advanced towards his guests.

"Come along, Mr. Palgrave!" said a sprightly American widow. "Gee, what a gloomy face! I guess you're wishing you were not going to lose your freedom so soon!"

"My dear Mrs. Vanderp, you wrong me!" protested Palgrave laughingly. "I never felt so happy in my life!"

"So you say. Shan't believe you, though, unless you prove it! Come along and sing us one of your songs right now. Let's have 'The Yeoman's Wedding.'"

The suggestion met with general laughter and applause, and Palgrave, who had an excellent baritone, agreed without demur.

"I could sing all night, Mrs. Vanderp!" he declared gaily, as he placed the music for the accompanist.

He was certainly in excellent form, and his sonorous voice rang through the room with lilting triumph.

"Ding-dong, ding-dong, I hurry along!"

came the refrain.

"Ding-dong, ding-dong, I hurry along
For it is my wed——"

Palgrave stopped abruptly. His face became rigid and ghastly, his dilated eyes glaring towards the door.

"*Pollotti!*" he gasped.

The cry with its horror was an awful sound. A hundred eyes, Marion's among them, turned instinctively.

Just within the doorway stood a stout little man in a heavy grey ulster. His sallow, foreign-looking face wore a frightened expression, and his gloved hands shook. Close behind, a tall Englishman, pale and grim, was holding the little man's shoulder.

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At the sight of him, Marion rose to her feet, her hands pressed to her bosom, and her white lips soundlessly forming his name.

Again came that cry, "*Pollotti!*" Then, amid the profound hush, a scarcely audible whisper—

"What devil's trick is this, Talbot?"

Palgrave leant against the piano, swaying a little, his white face so distorted that the guests drew away from him in alarm. As they did so, two detective officers came forward briskly. One of them put his hand lightly on the desperado's shoulder.

"Seth Worrell," he said, "I——"

But, with an impatient movement, Palgrave flung off the hand of the Law.

"Take your hand away!" he said fiercely. "And don't 'Seth Worrell' me! I am Mr. Ernest Palgrave, and if you aren't careful, my fine fellow, you will find yourself in Queer Street."

"Look here, Worrell," remarked Darencourt, advancing from the doorway, "this won't do you any good. You may as well submit quietly. We've got full proof against you now—not only Pollotti's evidence, but we have traced the man from whom you bought the poison, and we know how you disposed of the gold."

Palgrave's expression changed. He tried to hide the working of his lips with an unsteady hand.

"So you know," he muttered dully—"so you know!" He turned towards his sister, who stood very upright by the French windows leading to the garden. "Agatha, I'm afraid the game is up."

The words had scarcely left his lips when, with a quick movement, the woman flung apart the windows, and Palgrave sped like a flash through the opening and vanished into the darkness beyond.

A moment later the detectives and some of the guests rushed forward in pursuit. All was tumultuous confusion in the room, Marion alone remaining silent and motionless. Darencourt came to her and took her arm.

"It is quite all right now, Marion," he said quietly. "Don't be frightened. You are saved."

* * * * *

Marion raised her eyes to Darencourt's thoughtful countenance.

"But it seems so strange," she said, "that you did not remember before."

"Yet it is really not so strange, after all," he responded. "That illness did not quite finish me, but it nearly finished my memory. For some time I had none. Then it returned, except as far as my life in Australia was concerned. That has always been hazy, especially with regard to the affair of the hut, until I met Palgrave at Mrs. Preece-Allwyn's. That meeting brought back a great deal I had forgotten, but not everything—not until after I had parted from you on that memorable afternoon."

"After you had gone?"

"Yes, not until daybreak the next morning. As a matter of fact, Palgrave's own words unlocked, as it were, the last door that had closed on the past. He said there was no evidence, no witnesses, to prove his guilt, and, as I lay in the darkness, struggling to reconstruct the whole affair, I suddenly felt there was some doubt about *that*. I was able to recollect the four of us sitting with our coffee cups before us, talking and smoking. There was something about those cups that worried me. Then in a flash I remembered how they had rattled on the tin tray when they were brought in. Yes, *brought*—brought to the four of us by Pollotti! Till that moment I had entirely forgotten Pollotti."

"Yes, yes," said the girl eagerly, as Darencourt paused, frowning, "please try and tell me. He—Pollotti—is an Italian, isn't he?"

"Yes. Palgrave picked him up, a half-starved wretch, in the Sydney slums, and insisted on bringing him to Kulgorrie with us. We all three objected, but Palgrave, who was the only one with any experience of gold-mining expeditions, was not to be baulked. He said it was absolutely necessary that we should have someone to look after our things and get our meals for us, as we should be dog-tired after a day's work, and unfit to do a thing for ourselves. Of course, it was all part of his vile plot."

"You think he had planned it before starting, then?"

"I know he had. Well, as I said, I remember Pollotti bringing in the coffee, and how he was trembling. Mainwaring asked him what was the matter, and he said it was a touch of ague. Ague! He had just drugged the coffee. He swears, though, he didn't guess what was to follow. When I remembered him, that was enough. I felt sure that, if I could get hold of this fellow, I should have Palgrave by the heels. As you know, I started for Australia two days later. A week after reaching Sydney, I unearthed Pollotti. The name is unusual,

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you see. I accused him point-blank of the crime. The miserable fellow—rather a different stamp from his master—went to pieces at once. He confessed everything, and actually produced the notes Palgrave had given him to buy his silence. His conscience wouldn't let him use the money, but his dread of the murderer had kept him silent. I also unearthed the chemist who had sold the poison. So far not much difficulty, and it was not difficult to make Pollotti come back with me. It was during the return voyage that things went against me. I ought to have been home three weeks ago, but we had the vilest weather, and were driven right out of our course. However, we got back at last."

"Yes, and in time."

"Just in time. I came straight here from Scotland Yard, then, finding you not at home, hurried to Palgrave's. Of course, I never contemplated all the wretched publicity; Palgrave forced me to that. I asked to see you, as I naturally wanted you to be out of the trouble that would follow. But the scoundrel wouldn't listen. He managed to be pretty insulting. There was no time to lose, and I had come prepared for emergencies, so—well, you know what took place. Palgrave's flight was a desperate resource, but up to the present he is at liberty. I hear, though, that the police are hot on his track."

"Yes," said the girl, "but what happened to his sister?"

Darencourt shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm afraid none of us know that," he rejoined. "Miss Palgrave vanished, disappeared, directly it was certain that her brother was clear away. Perhaps she knew more than we think, but who can tell? At all events, I hope she has retreated into safe hiding."

"I hope so, with all my heart. What a terrible shock it must have been for her! She was intensely devoted to Mr. Palgrave. Indeed, I believe she would willingly have given her life for him."

"Yes, she was a woman, and I believe so, too, now. But I should not have done so a few months ago. Miss Cormac, I have a confession to make. I did you an injustice. I thought that you were making a selfish, sordid marriage. My experience—rather an unfortunate experience—had led me to condemn you and all your sex without exception as utterly selfish. Now I know what a fool I was. I have learned my lesson."

Darencourt looked intently at his companion, and she flushed at his obvious meaning. But her response was immediate.

"I also," she said steadily—"I have learned something—what a man will do for a woman in trouble—a woman without any claim on him; and I wish I could learn how to thank you, Mr. Darencourt."

"There is no need," he interposed, with a slight smile. "You forget. *I* am not one of the unselfish sex. I want more than thanks for any service I may render."

He rose from his seat. His smile had gone, and his voice was low and earnest.

"Dear Marion," he said, "I want—I want the great reward."

Darencourt held out his hands, and the woman who had loved him for many years went to him.

And he had his reward, his great reward.

SUMMER MET ME.

SUMMER met me in the glade,
With a host of fair princesses,
Golden iris, foxgloves staid,
Sunbeams flecked their gorgeous dresses.
Roses followed in her train,
Creamy elder-flowers beset me,
Singing, down the scented lane,
Summer met me!

Summer met me! Harebells rang,
Honeysuckle clustered near,
As the royal pageant sang
Songs enchanting to the ear.
Rainy days may come apace,
Nevermore to grieve or fret me,
Since, in all her radiant grace,
Summer met me!

FAY INCHFAWN.

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THE LEADER OF THE RUN.

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS,

Author of "Kings in Exile," "Neighbours Unknown," "More Kindred of the Wild," etc.

HE was a magnificent fish, by far the finest in the pool—all shining silver and the blue of damascened steel, fine in the head, massive in the shoulder, trim in the base of the tail, broad in the flukes, clean to the last scale, fresh run from the sea.

The pool, deep and spacious, was full of clear amber light; for the river was one of those northern New Brunswick streams whose waters, though of an exquisite transparency, are tinged with the colouring of a brown topaz. Through the centre of the pool swept the current in strong, slow swirls, streaked here and there with fine threads of foam from the wild rapids above. But at either side the water lay tranquilly shimmering over slopes of bright sand.

The splendid fish was not alone, for a good run of his kindred had come up with him from the gulf, and they were all resting a while in this favoured pool before essaying the long stretch of rapids and heavy water which lay immediately before them. But not one of them could compare with their leader for size, vigour, swift alertness, or the purity of the points of colour underlying the sheen of his iridescent sides.

It was a leased water, this lone and remote branch of the Little North-West; and because it was reputed one of the best salmon streams in the province, the price came high in spite of its remoteness, and much care was given to the protection of it. In spite of wardens and watchmen, however, there were poachers not a few who managed to find their way to the teeming pools. And the salmon, energetic from their long sojourn in the vivifying waters of the sea, and fiery with the urge of spring in their blood, had no care to hide their coming. No sooner had they arrived in the pool than they began to advertise their presence fearlessly, leaping half their length above the surface, flashing an instant all silver in the sun, and falling back with a heavy splash which was nothing less than a summons to all their enemies within remotest earshot.

It was not long before that summons brought a response.

From the foamy mouth of a brook which emptied into the lower part of a pool to the right, emerged a dark, lithe beast of perhaps four feet in length. His long, sinuous, muscular body, with its very short legs and powerful, tapering tail, had much of the fish-like suggestion of the seal. His head was short and heavy-jawed, his eyes luminous and intelligent. Dripping from the foam of the noisy brook, he climbed a sloping rock and poised himself rigid as the rock itself while he watched the pool till he had seen two salmon leap. Then he slipped back into the water as smoothly as if he had been oiled.

The otter was, in fact, as much at home in the water as any fish, except for his need of coming to the surface every now and then to breathe. In the matter of speed, he was able to fairly run down and overtake the slower fish, such as the heavy, pig-like sucker and the fat mud chub; but now it was salmon he wanted, and he knew that, in this case, he must call all his cunning to his aid. Taking advantage of some rocks, and then a long patch of weeds, he crept up the edge of the pool, making no disturbance in the water, till he was above the cluster of salmon, which lay all with their heads up-stream. Then, singling the one conspicuous fish for his prey, with a sudden, tremendous, screw-like motion, he darted into the shoal.

The king salmon, as if warned of his deadly election, had moved uneasily at the very instant of the otter's rush. He had the inestimable advantage, therefore, of being already started. Almost bending his body double in the violence of his spring, he shot aside, evading the doom. But he did not go quite free. The otter's jaws closed with a snap upon the thick part of his shoulder, just behind the gill-covers. But

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they caught him slantingly. Had he been a lesser fish, even so they would have held him. But with his great weight, and that all muscle and electric energy, he tore himself free, bearing a great red gash in his side. In a flash he was at the head of the pool, in the white smother at the bottom of the rapid. The otter, too wise to attempt pursuit, doubled back like an eel, and snapped up another smaller fish which, in its panic, had dashed almost into his jaws.

At first the deeply-wounded salmon left a trail of blood behind him. But, dreadful as was the hurt, it seemed to have no effect upon his vigour, and the icy water quickly checked the drain, astringing the edges of the cut arteries. At first he was too startled and shocked to choose his course, and drove on upwards straight through the smother. Here, of course, where the water was creamed with the foam packed down into it, and, therefore, full of air, there was less grip for the thrust of his tail and fins, and much of his power was wasted. In a very few seconds, however, he took hold of his wits again, and chose his way with more discretion.

The rapids were long, steep, and much broken—a succession of diagonal ledges and chutes and sluicing troughs, extending with hardly a break for several miles. To the river-men it was a place for portaging, only passable in canoes, under certain specially favourable conditions, and dreaded as "bad water" at the best of times. The salmon took it where the rush was strongest but least broken—where the solid sweep of the current, no matter what its velocity, gave him the hold he wanted, the purchase on which to exert his tremendous thrust. In such swimming as this, it must be remembered, his mere fins, in themselves, played a comparatively small part, except the great fins or flukes of his tail. His whole body, being one corded bundle of muscle and nervous energy, became now, for all practical purposes, but an extension of the tail, all screw and engine from flukes to gill-case. If one had been looking down from straight overhead, so as to avoid the baffling reflections of the water, one might have seen him go up, a straight, darting shadow, through the most terrific chutes and sluices without apparent effort.

But it took effort, all the same, for all its appearance of ease. Coming at length—through the pounding thunder, the choking smother of the foam strips, and the dizzying confusion of broken, whirling lights—to a sort of little cauldron under the lip of a ledge in mid-river, he was glad to rest for a while. Here the current was slackened down by the depth of the cauldron and by the meeting of a strong eddy which cancelled a portion of its violence. And here, though the current was torn and boiling, he was able to find a nook of comparatively slack water, and renew his strength for the next stage. But here also, surrounded by the thunder and the trampling of the mighty currents, certain tiny freshwater parasites had found precarious refuge. They hailed with delight the arrival of the great salmon, and fastened themselves greedily upon the edges of his raw wound. All unaware of their presence, he carried them with him when he pushed out once more into the current and resumed his strenuous journey.

Through the rest of the rapids the great salmon found no more places where he could halt. There was no let-up to the quivering, determined rushes with which he drove his way through roaring trough and rolling chute, till at last, worn and bruised, he gained the reaches of tranquil dead water which formed the next stage of his journey. In the first pool where the bottom was clean—for he hated mud and stranded refuse—he halted, and hung resting, head upstream and fins fanning gently, a few inches above the bright, sandy bottom. And here, in the course of the next hour or so, he was joined by the majority of his fellows whom he had quitted so abruptly in the lower pool. They were all too tired for play, and they had no inclination to feed, being seldom hungry on their return to fresh water; so they all lay side by side in the quiet pool, as sluggish as so many fat suckers.

That night was still and moonless, with large stars and a blue-black sky reflected in the long reaches of unruffled water. At times a pale winged moth would drop on the glassy surface, and disturb it a little with its feeble fluttering. Presently a big brook trout would rise lazily and suck the insect in with an oily gurgle, or slap it under with a loud, contemptuous flop of the tail before condescending to mouth and swallow it. But the salmon paid no attention either to moths or trout. For some unknown reason—weariness after the ascent of the rapids hardly seemed enough to account for it—it was not their custom to rise or jump while sojourning in this pool; and the salmon seems to be a great stickler for custom.

By and by there came a strange, lurid glare striking down through the water and illuminating the pool in a confused, distorted

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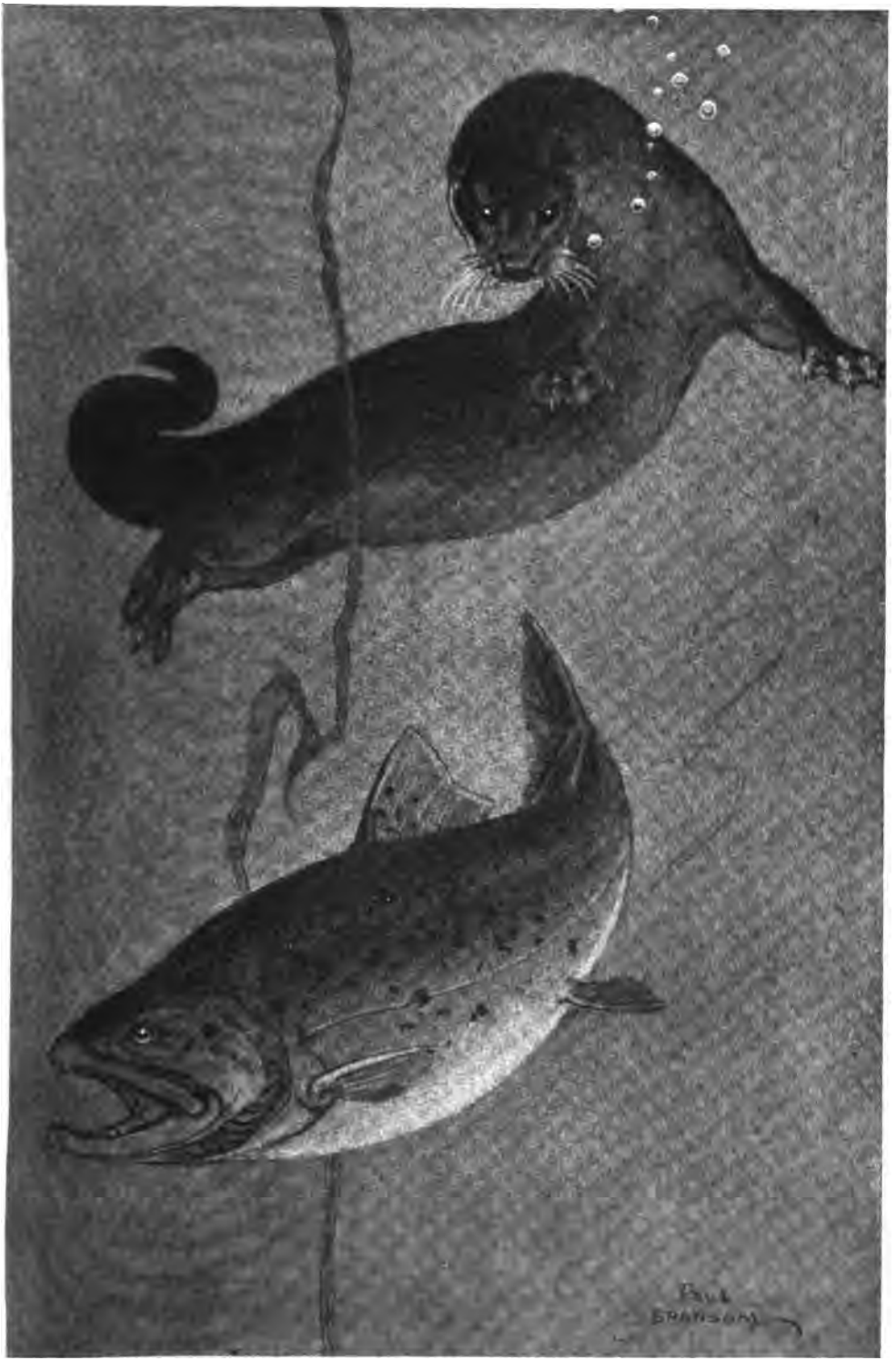

"The deeply-wounded salmon left a trail of blood behind him."

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fashion. Never before had the salmon seen such a light suffusing the waters, even under the rosiest sunrises of their ocean home. This light was near, and violent, and of a smoky orange, and it threw black, twisting shadows. They all turned their eyes upward, and swam slowly towards it, disquieted but fascinated. Behind the glare, which was moving very slowly upstream, came a long, narrow, dark shape, which at every other second or two made a deep swirl in the water near its hinder end. These fresh-run fish had never before seen a canoe, and in the sea they had learned to distrust all long, dark, moving shapes. But they were too much hypnotised just now by that mysterious glare to have any thought of danger.

In the canoe there were two men, squatters, and incidentally, during the run of the salmon, poachers. Owning—by mere right of occupation, to be sure—two little newly-cleared farms on the bank of the stream near by, they held obstinately that they had a right to all the fish they wanted out of these waters, lease or no lease, Government or no Government. And they held with equal obstinacy that they had a right to take them in any way they found convenient, law or no law. So, chancing to know that the warden of that section was twenty miles away upstream, they had come out for a little of that strictly prohibited sport, salmon-spearing by torchlight.

The man kneeling in the stern of the canoe wielded his short, broad-bladed maple paddle very subtly, so as not to jar the water by any splashing or concussion. The man in the bow stood behind the flaring torch of rolled birch-bark, his eyes shaded from the glare by the brim of his slouch hat, his knees slightly bent for balance and for readiness, and his long two-pronged salmon spear held poised over the side. It was really more of a fork than a spear, this weapon, the two prongs being of springy ash, and barbed, with a long slender point of steel between them, and so disguised that, when the prongs should be driven down on the victim's back with sufficient strength, they would be forced apart, to enclose and grip the writhing body while the steel transfixed its spine.

Among the fish drawn up to his dazzling lure, the man in the bow marked the great leader, a foot longer than any of its fellows, and his dark eyes sparkled with eagerness. The spear shaft rose erect in his tense grip, his knees bent, and his whole body assumed the lines of a beast about to spring. The immense fish came almost under the canoe. The spear darted downwards, the man seeming to throw his whole weight upon it, yet without losing his balance or too violently rocking the light craft under his feet. The next instant he recovered himself with a loud grunt, and stood erect, cursing eloquently through clenched teeth, and glaring at his spear as if he would make kindling wood of it. He had missed his stroke, and he the most expert spearsman on the river. He couldn't understand it. His comrade in the stern looked at him with quizzical surprise.

"Best git down to Fredericton, an' buy yerself a pair o' specs, Bill," he suggested amiably.

Bill told him earnestly of another place, where *he* could go to, warmer than Fredericton. And the canoe was allowed to drift away, that the occupants of the pool might get over their alarm and settle down.

The cause of the spearsman's discomfiture was this. The big salmon was not tranquil, like his companions. He was fretted by his wound, which was sapping his strength. Other greedy parasites had fastened upon it, and they caused a burning fever, which set his nerves all on edge. Attracted by the glare of the torch, he came at it with a restless eagerness. He knew not why, but he wanted it, and he wanted it at once. When he found another fish, as he imagined, barring his way, he flew into a most unsalmonly rage, and darted at the intruder, to root him aside with his horny, projecting lower jaw. That ill-tempered rush it was that saved him, for at that same instant the man in the canoe had made his lunge with the deadly fish-spear. The salmon felt a numbing blow near his tail, where one of the prongs struck him and ploughed another deep gash. Startled, and quite cured of his infatuation for the fatal flame, he tore away upstream, and never paused till he had put several miles between himself and this inexplicable experience.

He felt himself now astonishingly weary, out of all proportion to the short though violent run which he had just made. He did not understand how the old wound, with its gnawing parasites, and the new wound, with its shock and loss of blood, were draining his forces. But just because his vitality was being so sapped, Nature, ever careful for the continuance of the species, was urging him on all the more fiercely toward the breeding-grounds at the head of the river. Tired though he was, after a few minutes' halt, he continued his journey, leaving the rest of the run far behind in the feverishness of his haste.

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All that night he travelled, and on into the afternoon of the following day, and came at length to the great basin at the foot of the falls. Here, at any other time, he would have halted long enough to thoroughly refresh himself before attempting the difficult leap. These falls were by far the most troublesome obstacle on the whole river—a barrier so effective, indeed, that none but the most vigorous and dauntless fish of the run ever succeeded in passing it. But the wounded salmon was too driven by the urge of his fevered blood to take any time for recuperation. From the middle of the basin he thrust head and shoulders once above water, as if to reconnoitre the roaring wall of white and amber before him. Then, with a tremendous rush, he threw himself some eight or ten feet clean into the air, struck the face of the cataract several feet from its crest, and, with that mighty screw-like thrust of tail and body, shot straight on upward through the perpendicular column of water. But he had miscalculated his strength. Under the very lip of the fall, where the downward rush was of clear topaz, and so swift as to seem almost at rest, he faltered. The next instant, he was hurled back and trampled down through the smother to the boiling bottom of the basin.

Half stunned, he made his way to the deep, still water at one side of the pool, and lay quietly under the ledge, seeking to recover his strength. But he could not rest effectually, by reason of the ache of his wounds, the fret of the greedy freshwater parasites, and that insistent fever in his blood. When the doom of the wild has once snatched at its prey, and, in part, missed its grip, the unhappy victim seems marked for every stroke of Fate. So, long before the great salmon was sufficiently recovered to properly renew his venture, the sting within him urged him forth again. Once more he lifted head and shoulders above water, from the centre of the basin, and eyed the cataract through the rainbow spanning it, to assure himself that he had chosen the best path. As he did so, he saw a smaller fish flash up into the sunlight, shine for a moment like a crescent of burnished silver against the creamy front of the fall, take the clear flood of solid amber above the foam with strong precision, and dart triumphantly on over the gleaming lip.

The sight was too much for his prudence. With a splendid rage, he rushed forward to the foot of the fall, and hurled himself into the air through the iridescent quivering of the light and the whipping shreds of the spray.

It was a superb leap, two feet further than he had made in his first attempt, and a good foot beyond the mark of his triumphant predecessor. But, alas, it was a blind leap, and it went untrue because of that wound at the base of his tail. He struck the base of the fall to one side of the amber column, where the sheet of water was too thin and broken to give him any hold. Convulsively he thrust and lashed, but the treacherous element yielded instead of giving him the firm resistance which he required. He was swept aside, jammed against a projecting horn of rock, and dashed once more to the bottom.

This time he was not half, but completely stunned. For some seconds, unresisting as a clod, he was rolled over and trampled upon by the falling flood. Then the uprush carried him clear, and he went drifting with the slow swirls, belly upward, across the sunlit basin. Presently he came a little to his senses, righted himself, and with a feeble stroke of his tail made toward the quieter water inshore. Dimly he felt that he must recover himself as quickly as possible for another effort. Dimly the vision of those far spawning-beds of white gravel, bathed with icy springs, kept luring him through the darkness of his stupor.

He should have sought deep water for security; but just now his senses were so gone astray that instinct itself failed him, his doom being upon him. He swam blindly and feebly straight ahead, found the water getting shoal, turned irresolutely, and all at once felt a clutching weight fasten itself upon his back, and keen teeth burning deep into the base of his brain.

With a mighty convulsion he threw off his assailant, but the effort spent the last of his force. The same convulsion threw him forward into the shallows. With a heavy, splashing flop he lay over on his side, half out of water, the angry gash in his shoulder turned up to the sun. The next moment his assailant—a slim, dark-brown mink, with pointed muzzle and bright, savage eyes—was upon him again, and tearing at his throat. But he lay quivering, and knew nothing of it.

The mink, presently satisfied that his prey was quite dead, strove to drag the body ashore. Here on the open beach, in the full sun, it was impossible to make his meal with comfort. He did not like being so conspicuously in the public eye. He was a marvel of strength, to be sure, for his size and weight, his lithe body a mere bundle of whipcord muscles. But the dead salmon was heavy. Tugging doggedly, he succeeded

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in dragging it, by jerks, fairly clear of the water. But to get it up the beach and under the shadow of the bushes was quite beyond his present powers. Wisely he set himself to the task of reducing its weight, and at the same time refreshing his energy, by eating as much of it as possible, all the while keeping a furtive, malignant eye upon the thickets, lest some bear or lynx should appear to snatch the prize from his jaws.

High overhead in the unclouded blue, a dark shape was wheeling slowly, peering down upon earth with hard, glassy eyes of black and gold. That slow wheeling on motionless wings came to a stop. The splendid spread of pinion drew together, the gleaming white head and dark wing-elbows pitched grandly forward, and the huge bird dropped from heaven like a wedge. The wind hissed in the tense web of his feathers.

At the sound of that strident hissing, the mink looked up with a snarl of defiance. He made the mistake, for a fraction of a second, of thinking he had to do with a hawk; and in defence of his lawful booty he was prepared, being a dauntless little marauder, to make stand against any hawk. Too late he saw his error. With a cry of rage, he bent himself double and sprang back. But he seemed to spring straight up into the eagle's talons.

Game to the last gasp, he bit vainly into the hard, thick-feathered thigh above him. He got but a mouthful of fluff. Then the talons of steel contracted inexorably, and the life passed out of him with a whimpering gasp. The splendid bird opened his claws and tossed the limp brown body aside, scorning to feed upon such rank and stringy flesh.

With lifted wings he alighted beside the salmon, one foot planted arrogantly upon it in sign that it was his. For a few seconds he stared about him, his piercing, implacable eyes seeming to challenge anyone who might care to question his claim to the booty. As no one came, he presently fell to his meal, tearing the delicate flesh with his beak and gulping it in big mouthfuls. From time to time he would raise his beautiful, savage white head, now streaked with blood, and gaze curiously at the sudden silver crescent of some salmon leaping the falls. To him this seemed a useless and inexplicable performance. When he had devoured a good half of the prize, he clutched the remnant in his talons, rose into the air with a laborious flapping, and flew off, over the white roar of the falls and the dark masses of the hemlock forest beyond, to the lonely granite peak in whose cleft summit he had his eyrie.

TO THE MOON DAISIES.

WHEN breezes sigh,
And night-owls cry,
Why, daisies, weep ye too?
Ye are stars, indeed,
In grassy mead,
As they in Heaven's blue.

My mistress dear
A silver tear
Shed as we passed this way:
Were ye then born
The next glad morn
To weep your eyes away?

Nay, nay, for shame!
That gentle dame
Would chide you, were she here;
For happiness
And love, I guess,
Brought forth her silv'ry tear.

Then fare ye well,
Till mattins' bell
Call you to hymns of praise:
Thus Corydon
His song has done,
And homeward takes his ways.

LOIS VIDAL.

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THE TRIUMPH OF TONY.

By CHARLES BEADLE.

THE old adage that "birds of a feather flock together" is undoubtedly founded upon the social law, and it is particularly noticeable amongst human bipeds who go down to the sea in ships on long voyages.

The first-class passengers of the steamship *Rajput*, homeward bound from Colombo, had behaved according to their kind—the social cliques were well defined. At the head of each was, of course, the eternal feminine. But Miss Mercy P. Tobbs, by reason of her dollars and beauty, was the acknowledged sun—at all events, by the masculine portion of the company—around which circled the lesser social systems, much to the secret indignation of would-be rivals.

Attached to the greater luminary were her devoted satellites, all—with the exception of "momma," who did not count, and Miss Sadie Blitter, who served as a foil—of the male persuasion, of whom two were the much-envied moons.

Mercy was a young lady of great self-possession and possessions—fabulous dollars made by devoted "poppa" out of old sardine tins, or something equally prosaic. Now, Mercy unfortunately was suffering from an adolescent disease—romance.

She had got it real bad, probably because her parents had about as much romance as one of their own sardine tins or the weird product thereof. The Tobbs family had "done Europe," and were returning after having subjected the Far East to the same terrible process. They had left Wayback City, County Pa, wherever that may be, with the firm intention of providing Mercy with a suitable husband, with a handle or prospect of same attached. But that was Mr. P. Tobbs's idea. "Momma" was not particularly struck upon the titled aristocracy since she had read several accounts of mere actresses' marriages to members of that august body.

However, to return to our sheep, numerous suitors of all ranks, ages, sizes, and colours had been marshalled for Mercy's benefit; but she, pining for a Leander, turned down her pretty thumb with monotonous regularity. They did not die immediately, although many swore that they would; and, perhaps, if one had had the pluck to carry out his threat, charming Mercy might have relented—too late, perhaps, to benefit the courageous suitor, but *so* romantic for Mercy. She would have wanted to marry his statue out of gratitude.

But her parents—"poppa," particularly—were becoming tired of trying to satisfy Mercy's fastidious taste. He, in fact, had stated in the smoking-room that he was "fed up with the whole outfit," and the sooner "Murrcy" got a young man, the better he would be pleased. Mr. Tobbs was overwhelmed with sympathy. With the irony of life, every bachelor and widower on the ship was only too anxious to help the old man—as Mr. Bunn put it: "Men, men everywhere, and not anyone to marry!"

The whole ship—masculine—were deeply interested in the matrimonial future of Miss Mercy P. Tobbs. They felt it a point of honour to have her engaged before Plymouth. There were two favourites in the running for the dollar and beauty stakes—Mr. Anthony Bunn and Captain the Hon. Claude Terridge. The betting had fluctuated considerably during the first week out, had drawn to evens on the two favourites, then two to one on Tony; and after the previous evening, when, by a stroke of genius, Tony had hidden Mercy's chair and manœuvred that the soldier-man wasted over ten minutes in a solemn attempt to find it, thereby allowing Tony a full quarter of an hour's *tête-à-tête* with Mercy, all duly noted by competent and enthusiastic observers, the odds had jumped to five to one on Tony. Tony was a hot favourite.

Tony Bunn, although labouring under a really appalling name, was by way of being a wag. Under ordinary circumstances he might have been a humorist, but the combined effect of love and the sea air was too much for him, and he ran past himself. For instance, the first time he proposed to Mercy, he prefaced his remarks by observing

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that she really deserved to take the cake, and then offered himself instead. Well, men have been shot for less; and when Mercy, although smiling a weary smile for sake of politeness, refused him, he only got far less than he deserved. Otherwise, Tony was quite a good fellow, with sound views upon hygiene—that is, was clean-shaven, well-built, and good-looking generally, had knocked about the world and told big game stories which he did not expect anybody to believe—and nobody disappointed him.

Captain the Hon. Claude Terridge, on the other hand, was a man of very different calibre—tall, aggressively military, with fierce cow-with-the-crumpled-horn moustaches, blue eyes, and, oh, so very serious. He had all the external makings of an ideal hero, but, as Tony wallowed in humour, he would not have dealings with anything so trivial. He proposed to Mercy on the first and each successive occasion with all the nervous brusqueness of the melodramatic soldier: "Will you marry me? I love you. I am a simple soldier." He fired sentences at her like a human pom-pom. "I shall always love you. Be mine! I lay my—my tiny love—at your great feet—um—hah!" Mercy laughed hysterically; he grew more nervous and angry, sulked in his cabin until lunch next day, and proposed with clockwork regularity every night afterwards. Yet Mercy liked him immensely. She admired his soldierly bearing, decorations, simple, straightforward mind, and—and his family connections. Tony she liked, too; Tony was bright, clever—when he didn't run over himself—travelled, and amusing.

They were the only two Mercy had cared at all for, and she couldn't determine which had the greater attraction. Yet neither came near her ideal—the man who would really *do* something, be a hero.

II.

ABOUT three in the afternoon, as they steamed through the Straits of Messina, Mercy and Sadie Blitter were seated in a deck-chair under the lee of a boat on the upper deck, Mercy's wealth of dark hair and creamy complexion showing to the greatest advantage against a deep red cushion. Around them, grouped on rugs and cushions, were the two favourites and lesser satellites. Not far away dozed the amiable parents. Mr. Tobbs snored with infinite enjoyment, his favourite and incongruous yachting cap on his knees, indecently exposing what appeared like a withered turnip with pendant roots—goatee beard—to the gaze o world. His wife, in a frivolous ha into enormous dimensions, covered up a m. contented deck-chair with her ample pr portions.

The Hon. Claude had held the floor—quite unusually for him—for some time wit a splendidly accurate but appallingly dul account of miscellaneous craft, from the galleys of Tyre to the modern liner, which had come to grief between Charybdis and Scylla. To these excerpts from Baedeker Mr. Bunn had contributed at intervals, much to the annoyance of the narrator. The company were developing signs of restlessness as the noble captain exhibited symptoms of getting the bit between his teeth and galloping right into a morass of moral homilies.

"And," he was saying, "personally, I have no doubt that, as from so many other physical facts in Nature, a very fine moral can be drawn. Ethically speaking, doncher-know, I should certainly liken this famous whirlpool to—to——"

Tony looked appealingly at the goddess. She smiled bewitchingly and graciously inverted her thumb. Tony shook himself and waded in with glee to the verbal annihilation of his hated rival.

"Forgive me," chipped in Tony, "to the one who was so intoxicated with the exuberance of his own rhetorical verbosity that he constituted himself a bore—a tidal bore—not titled, you understand—a tidal bore, to continue the metaphor, which, racing eternally round its own ego—axis, pedantically speaking—literally—that is to say, with literary gilt effect—literally engulfing all the unfortunate craft brought by the passing current of circumstances in the vortex of—er—scintillating sound emanating, or appearing to emanate, from the dark-haired siren—or sirens—sitting on the bore—or ought-to-be-if-they're not—I should say, rock of the world-famous verbal whirlpool of Scylla and Charybdis, hence the one and only perfect, not-to-be-beaten-in the-two-hemispheres simile: will-you-come-and-have-a-game-of-deck-billiards-Miss-Tobbs?"

But Mercy, laughing undisguisedly, refused the invitation. The gallant captain, after two ineffectual attempts to regain his lead, had, with the aid of a fierce scowl and a pair of binoculars, developed a sudden interest in the Italian shore.

As Tony paused for breath, Terridge wheeled upon him. Said he—

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"Some people spend their lives in—to use your phrase, Bunn—in giving rein to the 'exuberance of their own verbosity' irrespective of social amenities."

The others sat up expectantly; they always enjoyed the sparring of the chosen twain, and it was so seldom that the soldier attempted a retort. Tony licked his lips in preparation as the other continued—

"Personally, I prefer a man who can do something other than chatter."

"And I agree with you, Captain Terridge," said Miss Tobbs, with a malicious smile at Tony, and before he could fire in his repartee. "Guess he's the man I've been wanting to meet for ages. I've never met one yet," she added—"at least, not worth writing home about."

"But," cut in a mellow voice, "you're *all* Shavians—talk, talk, talk, and nothing happens."

A roar met this sally from the dramatic star who had been standing by, amused by the little comedy.

"Bully!" exclaimed Miss Tobbs. "Don't you agree with me, Miss Vardred, that men seldom do anything but talk? Why, if the ship started in to sink right here, what would happen? Would anybody seize me in their manly arms and swim heroically with me to the land right there?"

She gestured dramatically. "No, everybody would talk — chatter. Why, it would be like drowning a cage full of monkeys!"

"That's all they are—monkeys!" said Miss Vardred, laughing.

"What a charming monkey your father must have been!" exclaimed Tony.

"Oh," declared the Captain sententiously, "no man could say exactly what he would do under given moments of stress and danger."

"There you are!" commented Miss Tobbs. "Just like a man—wants to talk about what he wouldn't do!"

"Well, that's better than a woman who suggests what couldn't happen," said Tony. "You suggest that I take you in my arms——"

"I didn't!" protested Miss Tobbs.

"Take you in my arms, take you in my arms," he repeated sentimentally, "take you in my arms——"

"Gee! Ain't you going to get on?" inquired Miss Tobbs impatiently.

"Take you—can't let you go, y'know," continued Tony solemnly. "Take you—all right"—dodging an avenging cushion—"and swim to yonder shore. It would be impossible. Just like a woman! And we should get caught in the whirlpool which Terridge has told us so very much about, and go whirling round and round for all eternity, but how nice—with you in my arms!"

"Now, just what would you men do," inquired Miss Tobbs, "if Miss Vardred there or I fell overboard?"

"Jump in after you," chorused the crowd.

"Yes, rather," assented Tony, "every man Jack, and then what a tragedy! Everybody in the water, and nobody to look after the ship."

"Reckon you're too smart," said Miss Tobbs, amid the laughter. "Captain Terridge would—say, now?"

"I did not say so, Miss Tobbs," returned the soldier. "I wouldn't be so foolish——"

Another shout of merriment.

"I mean, of course," commented the Captain, glaring about him, "that I would not dare to say exactly what I would or would not do."

"But surely, Captain Terridge, supposing I was leaning on the rail right here, talking to you, and the rail broke and I fell overboard, you would jump to save me? You can swim?"

"Yes, I can swim, and—and I hope I should do as you suggest. But I won't say that I would, because I maintain that no man——"

"Yes, yes, I know that," she returned, with affectation of great solemnity, "but I—I am disappointed. You would, wouldn't you, Mr. Bunn?"

"Oh, come now," replied Tony, smiling, "that's not fair. Not holding Terridge's theory, I can't reply."

Captain Terridge had risen as they spoke, and walked away to lean over the rail brooding. He took everything seriously; Miss Tobbs's affected disappointment was a tragedy to him.

That evening he made no attempt to propose to her.

By the morning he was almost praying earnestly that the ship would go down, or Miss Tobbs would fall overboard and permit him to save her, as he was quite confident that he would do, although he would not confess it in defiance of his pet theory.

Tony, meanwhile, thought to make hay whilst the sun shone. Feeling that his rival was at rather a disadvantage, he proposed

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again. Mercy refused to give a definite answer. She laughed as she said—

"Oh, Tony, you are a nuisance! No, it's perfectly impossible. You make me laugh, and I daren't laugh at a real hero!"

So Tony departed crestfallen, and sadly contemplated an existence upon an inadequate income.

III.

MERCY, with the delightful perversity of women, after having deliberately wounded the soldier's feelings, suddenly came to the conclusion that he held her greatest affection. Moreover, the fact of his having refrained for the one night only from proposing to her piqued her vanity, although she would not recognise the fact. Therefore the Hon. Claude was agreeably surprised to receive a shower of sunny smiles and to notice an unmistakable flatness in the effervescing Tony. His self-confidence and hope returned, and immediately after lunch he seized an opportune moment to press his suit again. He further proceeded to enter into an involved explanation of his pet theory, hinting that in practice he had no doubt whatever.

A new Mercy was revealed to him as the whimsical lips straightened into severity; she cut him short.

"You do not seem to realise that I was only joking. I admire you immensely, Captain Terridge."

"But I love you——" he began involuntarily, pulling his moustache.

"I believe you, Captain, and I promise you——"

"Yes?"—eagerly.

"I promise you," continued Mercy thoughtfully, "that if I feel towards you when we reach London as I do now, I will say 'Yes.' And that means," she added, smiling, "unless I meet my hero. Now let's forget the subject."

So the Hon. Claude was very pleased with himself and the world at large. He was not a believer in the romantic, and mentally scouted the idea of any melodrama on the prosaic journey from Marseilles to London. And had things been allowed to take their natural course, no doubt all would have been as the gallant lover wished it.

But Tony Bunn was very quickly aware of his rival's changed demeanour. He put two and two together, and discovered with customary brilliance that they made four. He did not despair, and the annoyance caused him by learning that he had dropped out of the betting spurred him to greater efforts

That evening he did not attempt to worship at the feet of the divinity. Miss Vardred noticed this, and sat herself beside him, laughingly inquiring how the course of true love ran.

"Very stormy," said Tony, smiling. "A nor'-easterly gale right in my teeth, and a deuce of a heavy swell on," he added, laughing at his own jest.

Miss Vardred smiled. She was a merry Bohemian spirit and liked a kindred soul. The Captain was too serious and phlegmatic to arouse her sympathy.

"Refused?" she inquired.

"Yes," said Tony, grimacing. "Said I wasn't a hero—that I only made her laugh."

"Poor Mercy," said she, "she is so young! He'll bore her to death. She'll make a bad mistake if she marries him."

"I'm with you there," agreed Tony, with a sardonic laugh.

"Yes, I suppose you are. Now, why don't you do something?"

"Well, ain't I been thinkin' at high pressure?"

"Well, I'll tell. Mercy's got romance badly. She wants a hero. Give her what she wants. Simple as ABC."

"Oh, is it?" groaned Tony. "D'you think I have a bundle of heroes on tap?"

"You're dense to-day, Tony—love's got to your head. Rescue somebody overboard, of course."

"Jove!" exclaimed Tony, sitting up. "Whom? You?"

"*Je ne pense pas!*" laughed the other. "You might let me drown. No, rescue a property passenger."

Tony sat back and chortled.

"Thanks!" he gasped at length. "Oh, I say, what a hoax, though! It would be a shame."

"Not at all," retorted the other. "All's fair in love and war, you know. I want to see you two make a match of it. And she would see the joke afterwards—when you're safely married, I mean. Will you do it?"

"Yes, by Jove, I will!" declared Tony. "But how are we going to manage it?"

"Oh, fix up a dummy woman and dive in after it. I'll shriek 'Man overboard!' Then—then—yes, I have it. I'll tell her afterwards that I did it to see who was the braver man."

"M'm!" muttered Tony doubtfully. "But supposing Terridge dives——"

"No, no!" exclaimed Miss Vardred, sitting up and excitedly tapping his knee. "Brilliant—positively brilliant idea!"

"Well?"—impatiently.

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"'You may kiss me, Tony,' she murmured softly."

"I'll suggest to Terridge the dummy idea. See?"

"No, I'm hanged if I do!"

"Oh, you are slow! Terridge is too dull to see—he will scornfully reject the idea. I can imagine it. 'No'"—Miss Vardred imitating him—"'I cannot stoop to deception—ugh!'"

"Well?"

"Why, you silly thing, the dummy falls overboard, you dive, the Captain won't—knowing it to be a dummy."

"Well?"

"Oh, you're unutterably stupid! You rescue the wretched thing at the risk of your silly life. The Captain will say he didn't go

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because he knew it was only a dummy! See? But *she won't* believe him. *You're* the hero. *Now* d'you see?"

"M'm, yes," said Tony doubtfully.

"Oh," said Miss Vardred petulantly, throwing herself back in the chair, "'pon my word, you're not worth helping."

"Please, I'll be good," said Tony penitently. "The chance is better than none at all. We must do it to-morrow night; we arrive at Marseilles the next morning, you know."

As Tony dressed for dinner, he chuckled hugely to himself as he chose his oldest clothes, pumps, and a soft shirt. "Nothing like being prepared," said he to his mirror. "Hope the water isn't cold!"

Miss Vardred had entered into the plot with zest. She had with great tact approached the Hon. Claude, suggesting with a laugh that they should throw a dummy overboard to see whether Mr. Bunn would act up to his word, and the gallant Captain had proved the accuracy of her judgment of character. The whole of that afternoon she had been immersed in her state-room, working hard, with the assistance of her maid, upon a really artistic property heroine.

At dinner the captain of the ship, next to whom she sat, thought her more charming than ever, little suspecting the mischief lurking in her mind.

Fortunately, it was a fine, still evening. The vessel seemed to glide through the placid waters at an appalling speed—at least, Tony thought so as he took a preliminary view of the scene of operations. The dummy, with a white shawl over its head, leaned naturally against the rail of the upper deck. Tony, deeply immersed in conversation with this fair companion as Miss Tobbs and her escort, the gallant Captain, sauntered by, laughed uproariously.

Mercy, recognising Tony's figure, wondered, with a sense of unaccountable annoyance, who his amusing companion might be.

As the two promenaded, Miss Vardred suddenly appeared, searching for someone.

"Ah, Captain Terridge," she exclaimed, catching sight of them, "Colonel Playmore wants you a moment — to settle some argument, he said. He won't keep you, you know."

Terridge, apologising, hastened away, whilst Miss Vardred engaged Mercy in conversation.

Presently Terridge reappeared, having given his decision to a fictitious question invented by the wicked Colonel, who had consented to aid and abet the plotters.

Miss Vardred loudly exclaimed: "Oh, my ankle!"

Tony, upon hearing the prearranged cue, deftly tilted his companion overboard with a lift of his foot.

Miss Vardred shrieked wildly, Tony hacked at a life-buoy, Mercy rushed excitedly to the ship's side and, to Tony's horror, shot clean overboard. The low rail had merely acted as a pivot to somersault her into the sea. Tony, without an instant's hesitation, dived straight after her.

Miss Vardred, who had seen the unrehearsed act, lost her head and continued to shriek in earnest that Miss Tobbs had fallen overboard. The boat had intercepted the Captain's vision, so that he had not seen the tragedy, and, remembering Miss Vardred's suggestion of the dummy, he thought that it was all a trap to make a fool of him.

"Don't be hysterical," he told Miss Vardred sternly. "Where's Miss Tobbs?"

"Overboard—overboard!" gasped the chief plotter. "Oh, Captain, save her, save her!"

"I shall not be made a fool of," announced the Hon. Claude viciously, and, leaving her, commenced to search behind the boat and elsewhere, believing that Mercy was hiding. At this Miss Vardred collapsed upon the deck, shrieking hysterically with laughter and terror alternately. The passengers, headed by the Colonel, poured up the gangways, seeking the cause of the uproar.

"Mercy—overboard — man overboard!" shrieked Miss Vardred, sitting helplessly in the middle of the deck.

The Colonel commenced to laugh. "Oh, yes," said he, "but I know all about that! Very good indeed! Capital! Ha, ha, ha!"

"But I tell you she is!" gasped Miss Vardred. "Stop the ship — stop the shi-p!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Colonel, doubling up with hilarity.

Tony, all mirth suddenly frozen within him, came up from his dive, and, seeing a bundle of clothes on the water, made for it frantically, to discover the wretched dummy. He cursed furiously as he sought anxiously for signs of Mercy. For a few moments he could distinguish nothing but the froth of the ship's wake, then a black dot bobbing in the creamy foam. He swam hard towards it, and caught Mercy from behind under the arms. She, almost spent with struggling, gasped and spluttered with relief.

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"Oh, Claude!" she exclaimed as soon as she had breath to spare.

"No, Tony!" shouted that individual savagely.

Tony cast an anxious glance towards the ship, which, to his dismay, was steaming steadily away. He could not conceive what had happened.

Mercy, lying still in his arms whilst he trod water, had evidently realised his identity, for presently she said faintly—

"Tony!"

"Yes—dear?"

"Where's the other?"

"There is no other," said Tony quickly.

"Oh, I thought—somebody else fell overboard."

The astute Tony did not reply.

"Is the ship coming, Tony?"

He looked again, and saw that at last she was steaming round in a great circle towards them.

"Yes, dear."

For a while they remained silent, Tony treading water industriously. His legs were already beginning to tire with the double strain.

"Did you dive after me, Tony?" came the faint voice mixed with bubbles.

Tony thought it an unnecessary question.

"Yes," he said.

She sighed in his arms.

"Tony," she said, "do you know that I've found my hero at last?"

"N-n-no!"

"You may kiss me, Tony," she murmured softly.

Tony kissed the back of her head, the only place he could reach, and felt that he did not care if the boat never came.

At length they heard the throb of the screw and the rattle of tackle lowering a boat. In a space that seemed all too short to Tony, she was lifted from his arms into the boat, and he quickly followed.

As she was carried up the gangway amid a throng of excited passengers, the Hon. Claude greeted her at the top. Said he anxiously—

"Are you quite safe, Miss Tobbs?"

"No thanks to you I am!" she said, brutally distinct.

"I—I thought you were a dummy!" stuttered the despairing Captain apologetically.

Never a word answered she, but with a look she wilted him.

SIGNS.

TWO eyes were given me,
Life's windows they;
Yet curtained well they be,
Lest light should stray.

A tongue was given me,
Heart's truth to tell;
Yet, lest it gambol free,
'Tis barriered well.

Oh, heart, hid deep within,
A prisoner thou
Lest one thy fortress win—
Whisht! Listeners now!

MARY BELL.

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SOME PHASES OF THE FIELDING ART.

BY H. D. G. LEVESON-GOWER.

OU may have heaven-born bowlers and batsmen of undeniable ability and imperturbable temperament, but these shall avail you nothing in the matter of winning matches unless they also can field well and catch well, and, what is just as important, know what to do in the field when not batting or bowling.

The above is an unwritten law of the game of cricket, much amplified. Never can critic or coach sufficiently drive home the imperative necessity for good fielding. "It's the dropped catches that lose the matches," said Lord Hawke many years ago now, and the famous Yorkshire captain never spoke truer words. He had round him in those days about the best fielding side, ignoring his bowlers, that ever was seen in one and the same county eleven. Tunnicliffe, prince of first slips, who, owing to his inches, was almost as useful as two slips in one; David Hunter, second to few as a holder of catches behind the wicket; the late J. T. Brown, a very fine point; F. S. Jackson and Rhodes, two of the smartest cover points of modern days; Hirst, without superior for years as a mid-off; Denton, the best outfield in England for several years; the late F. W. Milligan, another splendid outfield.

The art of fielding does not rest only in holding catches, in fielding the ball as it goes along the ground, in returning it straight and quick to the most likely end for a run-out. There are lots of other things to think about, especially by the captain of the fielding side. He may lose a match through not noticing that his first and second slips are standing too close together, or are too deep for the pace of his fast bowler, or too close for that of the fast ball of his slow bowler. On a sticky wicket two short-legs for a bowler who relies a good deal upon the off-break are always necessary to even the most indifferent of batsmen. Sometimes three have to be posted in that region, particularly if the batsman is a strong back player.

But these are points which are for the consideration more of the captain than the individual cricketer. It is with the duties of the individual that I am now chiefly concerned. The watchwords for him are never-ceasing vigilance, without which no player was ever yet a good field. There is scarcely a ball bowled which may not be hit or snicked to any fieldsman in the ground, and if, as is most likely, a yorker cannot possibly reach long-off through any effort on the part of the batsmen, it is still possible for long-off to save a run, or secure a run out from a yorker, by dealing effectively with the over throw. Ere now point has caught a batsman out from a snick on to the wicket-keeper's head, slip has got rid of a dangerous batsman by catching a ball that had been hard hit down on to the wicket-keeper's foot, and mid-on has secured a wicket by catching a ball driven by the batsman against the shoulder or back of the non-striker and thence up into the air. By making an extra effort to touch a straight-driven ball, a bowler may secure a run-out owing to the ball being deflected on to the wicket at his end. Of course, no bowler has tried purposely to deflect the ball on to the wicket, but the effect of his extra bit of exertion in a seemingly hopeless cause has been to do that and to dismiss a batsman simply because he made that extra effort. There is apparently no limit to what trying, preceded by ceaseless vigilance, can do in the fielding branch of cricket, and my advice to all young players is never to think a ball not worth trying for.

Take the case of a high catch. What can the deep fieldsman know about either the currents of air twenty, thirty, or forty feet up, or the strength of the batsman's hit, or whether he put spin on the ball by getting a certain amount of "cut" on it? Actually, the fieldsman is in absolute ignorance on all these points, knowledge on any one of which is of vital importance in the case of a seemingly impossible catch. The ball which once looked to be going twenty yards

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MR. H. D. G. LEVESON-GOWER.

Photograph by E. Hawkins & Co., Brighton.

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beyond him encounters a puff of air just when it is losing its original impetus, and falls ten yards shorter of where it seemed certain to go. A very big hit, to all appearance, by the batsman will, if the ball is fairly and squarely struck, send it, say, one hundred and ten yards. If the bat blade has, however, sliced across the ball and not truly behind it, the probable one hundred and ten becomes an actual ninety, and thus the speeding outfield who has not taken everything for granted gets to the ball which he, like many of the spectators near him, thought was going miles beyond him. Success in fielding thus depends on one long process of try, try, and try again, given the natural eye and keenness.

There is another matter which strikes me as being somewhat neglected these days—that is, how and where to back up. One of the proofs of a good short-slip is his instant move towards short-leg when it is probable that cover or third man will have to throw hard to the wicket-keeper. Omission to do this is certainly the hall-mark of a bad short-slip. Mid-on has quite enough to do to back up at the bowler's end, where there is much more likelihood of an over throw owing to the difficulty for the bowler to get back in time to receive the throw in. Short-slip should not expect mid-on to do his work for him.

Again, in backing up, the backer-up should stand just sufficiently to one side of the man he is backing up to get a view of the ball all the time—in other words, never, if possible, let the body of the man he is backing up get between him and the thrower. If he does, he will be unable to time the ball, which will be on him unawares.

Two other important items in the panoply of a fielding side, and I have done. It is vital that when a player is backing you up for a long return of, say, one hundred and thirty yards to the wicket, you should not try to show him he has underrated your throwing powers by trying to throw over his head. That always means another run to the opposition, as there is a wide gap between the wicket and the man backing you up, and nobody will be backing him up. You are there to prevent the other side turning an all-run four into a five, or possibly a six, and not to show off your throwing powers. So throw low and hard straight at him, and, if you really can throw, you will very likely enable him to bring off a run-out.

Finally, in practising fielding, which everyone who has the time and who intends to play much should do, one of the chief things to study, quite separate from actual judging of catches and sure ground fielding, is the best way to balance the body. Once off his balance, the best thrower with the safest pair of hands is like a rudderless ship. Balance counts next to good eyesight and good hands in fielding. Frequently a fieldsman misses a ball, or on fielding it cannot throw it in because he has got on to the wrong foot and so unbalanced himself as to be out of action. Wherefore practise footwork as much when at fielding practice as you do when in the nets. And, above all, try and try again until the umpires remove the bails, the first respite you receive once you have walked on to a cricket field to field.

MEADOWSWEET.

O MEADOWSWEET, with glamour rare,
Bedew the starlit summer air;
Bid soft winds shake thy scented plume
And scatter wide a rich perfume,
As I go forth to meet my Fair.

Methinks thy blossoms' odours bear
A spell which Eros, unaware,
Did loose when weaving at his loom—
O Meadowsweet!

Now I have found its fragrant lair,
With thee that spell I fain would share;
Its aid so potent I presume
To ask of thy enchanted bloom,
With it my Dear One to ensnare—
O Meadowsweet!

BERNICE DE BERGERAC.

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A MYSTERY OF THE DOWNS.

By E. R. PUNSHON,

Author of "The Glittering Desire," "Hidden Lives," etc.

T the rectory, breakfast had just begun. Mrs. Tonge was pouring out the coffee. The old Rector himself was neglecting his correspondence to read aloud the cricket news in the morning paper to his son, Wilton, who had just come in from his early stroll round their little farm.

"Kent is doing splendidly, splendidly!" declared the Rector. "If only Wiltshire were a first-class county, and I'm sure I don't know why we should not be—— I should like to see you facing Blythe, my boy."

"The only time I ever faced Blythe," remarked Wilton, "he got me third ball."

"Wilton spends quite enough time on cricket, as it is," said Mrs. Tonge, passing the coffee. "Do get on with your breakfast, James."

"Breakfast can wait, cricket results can't," declared the Rector; and Mrs. Tonge held up her hands helplessly, while Wilton laughed.

It was not long since he had left the University, where the fact that he secured his cricket "blue" in his second year quite made amends in his father's eyes for the very modest "pass" he scored in the schools. His future he had not yet decided, finding the present very agreeable with plenty of country house cricket for amusement, and the superintendence of the little rectory farm to fill up spare time. His father wished him to enter the Church, but Wilton felt he lacked the vocation. His mother wished him to do anything he liked, so long as he did not leave England. Fortunately, the problem was not a pressing one, as he had inherited a small capital of a few thousand pounds from an aunt, and, though his own tastes turned towards farming in the Colonies, he had as yet come to no decision.

The breakfast proceeded, and Mrs. Tonge said—

"You are not going to Stanstead to-night, are you, Wilton?"

"No, not till the morning," Wilton answered.

Stanstead was a little village in Gloucestershire, about forty miles distant. On the morrow a cricket match was to be played there, in which Wilton had promised to take part, having been invited as a kind of reply to the capture by the other side of a county "pro." A friend, also playing, was to call for him in the morning in his motor-car. Leaving at nine, they would have plenty of time in which to get to their destination for the start of play at half-past eleven.

A knock came at the door. Johnson, the bailiff of the little rectory farm, would like to see Mr. Wilton at once, if he might. Wilton left the room, and returned in a moment or two.

"I say, dad, there's another sheep gone," he announced.

"How very extraordinary!" said the Rector.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Tonge. "Who can it be?"

"I'll go down and have a look," said Wilton.

"Oh, your breakfast!" cried Mrs. Tonge.

Wilton picked up a small brown loaf from the table, put it in his pocket, swallowed the rest of his cup of coffee, laughed at his mother's horrified face, and hurried away.

Johnson was waiting, and together they made their way to the field whence the missing animal had vanished. Bloodstains in one corner showed where it had been killed; close by, under a hedge, was where it had been skinned and cut up. The best part of both hind and fore-quarters was gone; the rest had been left lying on the ground, and had been a good deal mangled by stray dogs. In all, they supposed that something like forty pounds' weight of solid meat had vanished.

It was the fourth time this had happened within the last few months, and so far every effort to find the culprit had failed. Once a watch was kept night by night for six weeks, and the very first time it was abandoned, the third sheep went. That had made Wilton think that the thief must be

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someone in the neighbourhood acquainted with their plans, but no definite clue could be found.

He went off now to see the police, and the local sergeant came down, and looked very wise and asked many questions, but achieved no special result. The only real discovery was made by a ploughboy, who came to tell them that on a certain damp and muddy spot was the print of a naked foot. They went to look, and found near by some drops of blood and a piece of wool, which seemed to prove that the slayer of the sheep had escaped that way.

"Only it is so small," Wilton said; "it looks like the print of a child's foot."

"Perhaps whoever it was had a child with him," suggested the policeman.

"In which case it must be someone living near here," observed Wilton. "We'll start watching again to-night. I'll catch the fellow somehow if I never sleep in a bed again!"

He kept himself busy the rest of the day, searching for clues, but without success. In the morning his friend called in his motor-car, and Wilton departed with him. They arrived at Stanstead in good time, and found their host in a very bad temper.

"Awfully annoying!" he said. "Last night ten pounds of butter vanished from the dairy, and not a sign to show who took it, except one footmark—that of the naked foot of a child, apparently."

"Oh!" said Wilton. "Naked foot of a child, eh? Curious."

It struck him as an odd coincidence, but, with forty miles dividing Stanstead from the rectory farm, he did not suppose there could be any connection.

"I don't know what is coming to the place," his host went on ill-temperedly. "Twice this year Griggs, of Thicker's End Farm, just next to this place, has lost a steer—found them dead in the morning in one of the fields, with not a sign to show who did it."

"How were they killed?" Wilton asked.

"Knocked down, apparently, and their throats cut," the other answered. "About forty or fifty pounds of the meat was missing, and the first time a long strip of hide. Queer affair altogether."

Wilton agreed that it was queer, and all the day was so deep in thought, he did himself small credit as a cricketer. The county "pro." got rid of him in his first over, and later he missed an easy catch.

"I believe the loss of those sheep has got on my brain," he said, in explanation of his misconduct; and, as some of his hearers did not know the story, he repeated it. One of them, the son of a farmer in a large way, whose place lay some distance west, not very far, indeed, from the foot of the Mendip Hills, remarked that they had lost five or six fine geese that year.

"About one every fortnight," he remarked. "Odd thing is, we can't imagine who it is, or how it's done."

"Foxes," suggested someone.

"None about," retorted the other. "Besides, foxes don't open doors and shut them again afterwards."

"Dishonesty seems very widespread just now," remarked Wilton. "You must be over fifty miles from us, or from this place."

Nothing more was said just then. On his return home, Wilton was careful to set a close watch, and the next day he went to see the chief constable of the county. That gentleman had not much information to give, but one fact appeared very clearly—that there was a good deal of freebooting going on. Chiefly what was stolen was food—sheep, poultry, eggs, and butter from dairies, being the chief losses reported. There were several cases, too, of farmers complaining that someone was milking their cows. Wilton got a list of all cases reported, and then wrote to the chief constables of the neighbouring counties. The result was he found that, over an area extending from the Mendip Hills on the west to the North Downs on the east, from the New Forest in the south to the Cotswolds in the north, these cases had occurred at intervals for more than a year past.

"Looks as though there were a gang out," he said to himself, "or perhaps a party of gipsies in a van perambulating this district."

He began to check the dates carefully, and found that, when one theft occurred, the next invariably happened at least thirty miles, and more often fifty or sixty miles, in an opposite direction.

Wilton gave it up as a puzzle beyond him, and lay down to get a little sleep before going to take his share in the watch still being maintained over the field where the sheep were.

All was quiet and peaceful, and the watchers saw nothing to reward their vigilance. Two o'clock tolled out from the church clock, and suddenly Wilton was sure there was a faint sound he could hear somewhere near.

He lay still, scarcely breathing. The

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night was dark; there was no moon, and clouds hid the stars. He had enough knowledge to teach him to keep his eyes near the level of the ground, so that anything moving should be apparent against the horizon. Nothing showed, but none the less he was certain something was near by—something that was watching him. Every nerve was tense. He had an impulse to call out, but repressed it. He lay and watched, and he was sure something moved and was still, moved again and was still once more, close by where he was lying. All his life seemed concentrated in his eyes, so intently did he strain them in his attempt to pierce the darkness. He was more and more certain that a little way away the blackness of the night was more intense than elsewhere with the darkness of a crouching shadow that sometimes moved.

On a sudden he leaped to his feet and made a rush. He flung his arms wide, but they closed only on the black and void night. From a distance a low laugh sounded sweetly.

He ran in the direction it seemed to come from. He heard nothing, saw nothing; but when the day broke, they found all the sheep in the field huddled together in the middle of it, pressing close one against the other.

On the dewy grass, too, were faint, indistinguishable tracks circling about the sheep. Beyond doubt during the night someone or something had been in the field, and had herded the sheep together into the position in which dawn showed them.

"It be the Devil hisself," said one of the watchers with conviction.

Wilton said nothing, but in his ears sounded ever the echo of that sweet, mysterious laugh he had heard issue from the void of the darkness of the night. He searched diligently to find any trace or track of any kind, but without success, save for those in the dew about the sheep, that were already vanishing in the breath of the hot sun.

He went back to the rectory, haunted by the memory of that laughter of the night—mysterious, sweet, penetrating. He telegraphed, cancelling for a time all his promises to play cricket, and, taking food and money and a stout stick, he went up on the broad downs below which the rectory lay.

For it seemed to him—though why he knew not—that somewhere in the bosom of the wide and silent downs must lie hid this mystery he sought.

For days he wandered, questioning, inquiring, hearing ever a mysterious, unknown sweet laughter echoing in his ears. He met with but poor success. Stories there were in plenty, vague and strange and unsubstantial as the morning's dew. One man had seen something—what, he did not know; one man had heard something—what, he could not tell. Some who were the wisest and knew the most spoke the least, for why, for the benefit of this wandering stranger, should they risk bringing on themselves the anger of the unknown and ancient powers of the moor? Besides, Wilton evidently belonged to gentlefolk, and gentlefolk are a race apart, of whom one must always be wary, they having odd ideas, though being useful for extracting money from.

Wilton grew, during these days of his wanderings, to hate his gentility, his education. The moment they heard his Oxford accent, a veil seemed to drop between him and the people of the downs. At once they regarded him with suspicion; he was not one of them, and those to whom he belonged it seemed he had left. The things he knew about they had never heard of, and of what they knew and were instructed in, he was utterly ignorant.

Disheartened, he would have given up the quest, but that continually he came across fresh evidence of someone, something, some spirit or power, or who could tell what, that roamed the downs over an area with a radius of something like sixty miles, with this district, as it seemed, for a centre. And always he had the memory of the music of the laughter he had heard issuing with a strange beauty from the void of the dark night.

At one farm where he stayed a day or two, they put out every Saturday night a loaf of bread and a bowl of milk. In the morning bread and milk were always gone. In return twice over they had been saved from serious loss. Once a valuable pure-bred cow strayed, and was searched for in vain. Then one night it was brought back.

"Tethered to the yard gate we found her, sir," said the farmer. "Now, who did that?"

Another time a tapping at the window had roused the farmer, who, on going down, had been just in time to save his pedigree mare, which had managed to cast herself in the stable.

"And nothing to show where the tapping came from," his wife told Wilton, "except as next morning, by the pond, there was the print of a naked foot—as it might be, a child's"

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Wilton hinted that the next time the bread and milk were put out, he would like to watch. It was an unlucky suggestion. He was told plainly that nothing of the kind would be permitted, nor were his apologies received very willingly.

By this time news of his quest was widely spread, and he received word that something had happened at a certain farm in a very lonely spot some miles distant from where he was then. He went at once to the place indicated, and found the farmer in a state of great indignation and annoyance.

Frequently of late they had found that during the night one or more of their cows had been milked. Finally the farmer decided to watch, and he and his shepherd took up their position one night, one on each side of the field in which was the herd of cows. They had heard nothing, but in the middle of the night one of the cows left the herd, and went off alone, as if in answer to some summons perceptible only to itself. The farmer and his man tried to follow, but soon lost it in the dark, and the next morning it was found quite dry.

"As dry as the back of my hand," said the farmer; "but the oddest thing of all, 'tis, as shepherd says——"

"Says what?" Wilton asked.

"Why, he says as he heard someone laugh, in the dark just at his elbow—a low laugh, like a happy child's, he said. He says as he thinks 'twere the Devil tempting him; but for what should the Old 'Un want to tempt the likes of him?"

"It sounds very strange. A laugh, you say?" Wilton asked.

"Yes; but, devils or not, I'll get even with 'em," declared the farmer. "I've got a brother what's foreman to Mr. Dickens—him as breeds them prize bloodhounds. I've wrote to him, and he's coming with one of the hounds, and I reckon we'll give a good chase to anything what comes after my cows again."

By dint of some persuasion, Wilton obtained permission to make one in the contemplated pursuit, and the next day the farmer's brother arrived with a magnificent hound of the purest breed and of perfect temper.

For two days nothing happened, and then, on the morning of the third day, one of the farm boys came running to the house with word that the brindle cow had been milked dry again.

Very soon they were on the trail, which the hound found without difficulty. Straight from the farm it led them up to the wide spaces of the downs above, without hesitation or delay, and so swiftly that, had it not been in leash, it would soon have outstripped the three men following.

"The scent is laying fine," declared the farmer's brother, Bill, as everyone called him. "I never knew it better. We'll be able to follow this to the sea."

Swift and silent, its nose down, the hound trotted on, straining against the leash that held it back. Once the farmer pointed to a flat stone, on which some fresh drops of milk were still visible.

"It rested there," he said—"rested and took a drink."

For another mile they ran straight on over the quiet downs. Then the farmer spoke again—

"There's running water ahead," he said. "Nought evil can cross running water."

In fact, they came soon to a little stream, and there, for the first time, the hound was at fault. The hunters had to pause while it ran to and fro, sniffing and seeking.

"Take it up and down the bank," Wilton said. "If whatever we are following took to the water, it must have left again somewhere."

"Which way?" Bill asked.

"Try up first," Wilton said—"the land looks lonelier up there."

"That's so," agreed the farmer; "'tis the loneliest, dreariest spot I know up there."

"And try the further bank," Wilton added. "Probably our quarry has crossed it and gone on, or we should have seen something of him if he had doubled back."

The hunt was resumed accordingly, and half a mile up the stream the hound suddenly began to nose at the ground and then made off at right-angles.

"He has found again," said Bill excitedly.

The scent seemed strong, for the hound pulled with vigour. They followed it, and it led them full speed to a rabbit warren about a quarter of a mile away. At the entrance to one of the burrows the hound sniffed for a minute or two, and then sat down quietly and wagged its tail contentedly, and looked up at the three men with the exact air of saying: "There, haven't I succeeded beautifully?"

Not one of the three men spoke a word. They stood looking oddly at each other and at the mouth of the rabbit-hole. The hound wagged its tail. The farmer was very pale. Bill had the air of expecting next the fall of

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the skies. Wilton was conscious of a curious thrill of wonder and of fear. He listened intently, half expecting to hear a low, delicious laughter breaking the immense silence of the downs.

"This beats all," said Bill, with tremendous solemnity.

"It's black magic!" said the farmer. "Let's get home quick."

They went back accordingly, and a good deal more slowly than they had come, the only content member of the party being the dog, which kept wagging its tail, and had quite the air of having brought a very difficult business to a satisfactory termination.

The news of this hunt that had led to a rabbit's burrow spread wide over the downs, and the general opinion was that the hunters had been strangely fortunate to escape being themselves turned into rabbits. Wilton went to see the dog's owner, Mr. Dickens, who was very interested, but could throw no light on the matter. However, he offered certain advice, on which Wilton determined to act.

He did not possess a motor-car, but he understood them fairly well; and he hired one and kept it at the rectory, always ready for use. Then he made a tour round the downs, distributing prepaid telegraph forms, and promising a reward of five pounds for the first that reached him with authentic news.

He went back to the rectory and waited, and before very long a telegram arrived, early on a Monday morning. He rushed away to his car, and it was off and tearing down the main road with all possible speed. First his course took him to the establishment of Mr. Dickens, who, already warned by telegram, was waiting for him with a hound in leash. With few words spoken, Mr. Dickens jumped into the car with his dog. Wilton turned and dashed away again, and by half-past nine was at the farm whence had come his telegram of warning.

It seemed a goose had vanished during the night, and one of the farm-hands was certain he had seen a shadow slipping through the farmyard. He had tried to follow, but failed in the darkness.

The hound was at once put on the trail. The scent seemed strong, for it started at once, running swiftly and strongly. Mr. Dickens, Wilton, and several of the farm people followed, but by the time they had gone four or five miles, Wilton and Mr. Dickens were alone, the others having dropped off.

Wilton was growing excited now. The farm they had just left was several miles distant from the one whence the last hunt had started, but he was sure, from the lie of the country, that the two lines of pursuit were converging.

"Look, look!" he exclaimed at last. "There's that stream where we were baulked before."

At the stream's bank the scent was once more lost. Wasting no time, the two men followed it upwards, and when they came near to the rabbit warren, the scene of Wilton's earlier discomfiture, Mr. Dickens took off his coat and wrapped it round the hound's head. Muffled and blinded, the hound was thus led till they had left the rabbit warren three or four hundred yards behind. Then Mr. Dickens released the dog, which evidently was much puzzled at his proceedings, but accepted them with an air of dignified protest, as though it were really no use attempting to account for human beings.

Some distance higher up they struck the scent again. Evidently here was where their quarry had left the stream, and Mr. Dickens laughed with delight.

"I don't know how that trick at the rabbit warren was managed," he said, "but this is evidently the right place."

They followed the hound, straining hard at the leash that held it. The country here was desolate and wild in the extreme. Not a creature was in sight. On all sides stretched the desolate bareness of the downs. Their course led upwards, almost parallel with the course of the little stream, though at some distance from it. On a sudden the hound, even as they were watching and following, spun round in its tracks and fell dead.

For a moment the two men stood and stared, almost disbelieving their own eyes. No living thing was in sight, save for a bird winging its high path overhead. Not a sound had they heard—nothing to account for what had happened—but there lay the dog dead at their feet.

"Look!" said Mr. Dickens, pointing. "Look!" he repeated in a hoarse whisper.

Blood was coming from the dead animal's head. Looking more closely, Wilton saw that it had been pierced by a smooth round stone about the size of a hen's egg. The missile had come with such force that it had penetrated the brain, causing instant death.

"Who threw that?" Wilton asked, amazed, and staring all round at the wide, blank downs.

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"No human hand," said Mr. Dickens, "ever threw a stone with such force as that."

II.

Mr. Dickens was evidently much shaken, and Wilton himself was conscious of a feeling of strange awe and dread. At their very feet the hound lay where it had been struck dead, and by whose hand or in what way they could not imagine.

For some little time they remained searching the vicinity, without finding anything to account for what had happened. At last they went back to the farm whence they had started, and told their strange tale, which was received with awe and wonder.

They had something to eat—of which they stood badly in need—and then Wilton created a sensation by announcing that he was going to return to the scene of the hound's death. The farm people did their best to dissuade him, and plainly looked on him as a lost man when he persisted in his intention.

"I'm not going to let it end here," he said; but in truth it was a memory of faint, delicious laughter heard out of darkness and night that really drew him to return.

He supplied himself with plenty of food and started off. It seemed to him that the slaying of the dog showed that whatever it was they pursued had been hard pressed. Possibly at that very moment they had been near its lair. For one thing, it was significant, he thought, that each line of pursuit had led to the same neighbourhood, and it was his intention to search that neighbourhood thoroughly. If necessary, he meant to remain on watch day and night, and see if someone or something did not appear.

He had with him a good pair of glasses, and, selecting some rising ground, he lay down and waited.

All the remainder of the day he stayed there and saw nothing. Evening came. The last rays of the sun lay slantingly across the wide spaces of the downs. Nothing was to be seen, nothing heard. The passing of a belated bee buzzing its way home was an event. It was so lonely, Wilton had sometimes the impression that perhaps he might be the last man left alive. Immeasurably remote seemed the busy, crowded life of the plains below.

It was night now, and all the downs were wrapped in a soft, impenetrable darkness. An immense silence brooded. Overhead one by one the stars shone out. There was no moon. Once or twice Wilton dozed. In spite of a thick blanket he had come provided with, he was very cold, and the dew drenched him like rain.

Slowly the night passed. A damp mist rolled on the downs, as though the world were drowned in a great grey sea. In the east a light showed. The great, fiery rim of the sun shone gloriously, and, behold, a miracle, for it was day.

Wilton, watching, felt his night of vigil well repaid, and then, on a sudden, he saw, at a little distance below, at the edge of a small hollow or basin in the ground, a human figure, as though it had sprung that instant from the earth. Silent and straight it stood there, apparently also watching the wondrous rising of the sun.

Wilton felt for his glasses, and with a trembling hand adjusted them. He could see more plainly now, though not the face, for the figure had its back to him. He could distinguish that the form was that of a young woman. Her hair, apparently very thick and long, was caught up and secured in thick coils on the top of the head. Over her shoulders and across the upper part of her body she wore a sheepskin, and she wore a short kilt formed of another skin descending to the knees, the lower portion of the legs and the feet being bare.

With infinite caution, Wilton began to creep nearer. All his fieldcraft he called to his aid, and prayed for more, for never since the world began had hunter had nobler quarry. Nearer he crept and nearer, crouching, crawling, taking advantage of every cover the bare down afforded, grateful for every stone, glad even of a mole-heap.

She still stood motionless, and so far, at least, evidently did not dream of his approach. It seemed she was absorbed in watching the wonder and the glory of the rising sun. Nearer Wilton crept, light of foot, hoping intently she would not look round. At last he got within five yards, and, crouching behind a stone, where the ground rose slightly, he rested, hesitating what to do.

Now that he was so near, he could appreciate better the extreme strange beauty and wonder of her form. On her delicately sloping shoulders her head was poised with a perfect grace. Her attitude seemed so light, he wondered if the grass bent beneath her feet. He saw her arm and hand, half-closed, hanging by her side, and wondered at them. As she stood there, watching the sun rise, she seemed a thing of air and light compact, as though, perhaps, new-born from the dew and the sweetness of the heather

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"Wilton, with a supreme effort, flung out his hand and caught her by the wrist."

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and these first rays of the sun. Had a god dreamed in the fresh morning, before wakening, such a vision as this might have been his.

Whether now he made some slight noise, or whether she began to feel his presence troubling her superb loneliness, he did not know, but she seemed to grow slightly uneasy. She moved, bending forward a little. She put up one hand to her eyes and seemed to gaze away towards the distance of the horizon. Wilton rose carefully to his feet. She glanced over her shoulder and saw him, and on the instant fled away, running with a wonderful, swift lightness.

Wilton followed, more heavily, but not less swiftly.

He called to her once or twice, but she heeded not at all, and afterwards he saved his breath, feeling he would have need of all of it.

Away and away they went over the wide quietness of the downs, away and away, mile after mile in the fresh and solemn dawn, past little rabbits that scampered out of their path, past birds that scarcely winged their airy path more swiftly or more lightly; away and away, by mild sheep that hardly heeded, by solitary shepherds who stood and stared, and told later the tale, to be branded therefor as liars all the rest of their lives; away and away, through solitary places, swiftly where the ground descended, scarce less swiftly where it rose, on and on till the long miles lay uncounted behind, pursuing man, maiden pursued.

By chance, or by preference, she kept ever to the wilder, more solitary districts, of which, indeed, this part of England can show, perhaps, the most remote in the whole country. Sometimes she gained a little, sometimes she lost a little. Wilton dared not relax his pace for one moment lest she should vanish; all his being was concentrated in the one resolve to run on till he overtook her or till his heart burst.

Away and away they went, on over the wide, free spaces of the downs. Though neither of them knew it, their course had brought them circling back to not very far from where they had started. Their run had fallen to a kind of staggering trot; they reeled as they went, and rolled from side to side. The thought was in Wilton's mind, "One spurt, and I could overtake her," but his tired muscles could not respond to the stimulus of his mind. A seven-year-old child could now have outrun them both with ease. Wilton's eyes were dim—a blackness came and went before them. Every sobbing breath he drew was an agony, and sharp knives stabbed him through the sides.

On a sudden the girl fell on the short turf, and where she fell, there she lay motionless.

Wilton, with groping hands that sought vainly for support, staggered the few yards that separated them, and, as he reached her, fell also, pitching forward on his face and lying as motionless as she did.

They lay so still they might both have been dead but for their heavy, gasping breath, as their tortured lungs strove to take in air. The girl was the first to move. She made as if to rise. In an instant Wilton, with a supreme effort, flung out his hand and caught her by the wrist, for he knew that, if she once got to her feet and resumed her flight, he would not have the strength to follow her—no, not even another yard.

From the girl's lips there escaped a low, strangling sob. That grip upon her wrist was a sign to her that the days of her wild freedom were over. No longer was her liberty inviolate; it was as though upon her she felt closing the shadows of the prison-house.

In a frenzy of panic she struggled wildly, furiously, as all wild creatures struggle when they feel themselves taken and trapped. She lowered her head suddenly and sank her teeth into the flesh of his wrist. He made no sign that he felt, his grip did not loosen. All at once her struggles ceased; she lay still and quiet, save for long shudders that succeeded each other at intervals, shaking her from head to foot.

Wilton released his hold. She made no attempt to move, but lay still and silent. He sat up and said in a low, weak voice—

"By Jove, that was a run!"

She did not seem to hear. She remained in the same position, only that her long shudders ceased, or came at least less frequently. Wilton said again—

"Yes, that was a run."

There was another pause. Then she moved and sat up. For the first time he saw her face plainly, and he wondered at its beauty. She was watching him intently from her wonderful bright eyes, that were as blue as the skies of Southern lands. Presently she put up her hands to her hair, disordered by her long flight, and began to rearrange it. The gesture reassured Wilton; it was familiar, reminding him of the women he knew, and bringing her, as it were, into relation with his experience.

"I say," he said, "I'm awfully sorry, you know."

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She made no answer. He was aware of an odd feeling of embarrassment—of shyness almost. After another pause he tried again.

"You *can* just run," he said.

"I thought I could run faster than anyone else," she answered then.

Her voice thrilled Wilton strangely. The blood rushed to his cheeks; he lowered his head that she might not see. But her eyes were sharp, and she asked in tones in which a certain reassurance seemed to show—

"Why are you so red in the face?"

"What made you run away like that?" Wilton asked, judging it easier to counter by another question.

"Because——" she said, and then paused.

It seemed that, after all, she was veritable woman.

"I say," Wilton asked suddenly, "it was you, wasn't it, I heard laughing one night over there?" And he pointed in the direction in which the rectory lay.

"May I go now?" she said, without answering his question.

"Go—where?" he asked.

"Back to my father."

"Your father?" Wilton repeated, and nothing she could have said could have more astonished him. "Oh, your father! Who—where is he?"

"At home."

"Oh, your home!" Wilton repeated, more and more surprised. "Where is your home?"

She lifted a hand and pointed without speaking to the slope of the down above.

"Up there?" Wilton asked.

She nodded.

"Will you take me there?" he asked.

She nodded again. She had the air of accepting him as her conqueror, and of considering that he had a right to demand acquiescence of her. She got to her feet and began to walk slowly up the slope of the down, and Wilton followed at her side.

"My father is ill," she said, as though feeling some further explanation were required—"he is ill, and I cannot leave him for long. That is why I went to get milk at the farm near here several times so close together. Father always said we should never go to the same place for what we wanted twice during the same moon."

"How long have you been living here?" Wilton asked.

She appeared to consider, and then shook her head.

"Since I was young," she said presently.

"Since you were young?" Wilton repeated, looking at her.

She nodded gravely.

"And it was you," he went on, "we followed that day with the dog?"

"Yes," she answered.

"The scent led us to a rabbit hole," he said. "Did you change yourself into a rabbit?"

"No," she answered, gravely surprised. "I could not do that—no one could."

"Then how was it?" Wilton asked.

She seemed to hesitate, and then laughed—the same low, soft, delicious laughter he remembered so well.

"I ran in the water," she explained, "so that the dog should not be able to trace me. Then, when I got near the rabbits, I stood on the bank and called. When one came, I cut my finger and put blood on its tail and on its feet. It was frightened then, and ran back to its burrow, and I knew the dog would follow the scent of my blood. So I jumped back into the water, and went on up the stream."

"And do the rabbits come when you call them?" Wilton asked.

"It would be strange if they did not," she answered, "when we are friends."

"I see," said Wilton. "And that other time, when our dog was killed?"

"Father did that," she answered. "I was sorry for the poor dog, but you were near our home."

"Near your home!" Wilton exclaimed. "We saw nothing."

"Our home is not there to be seen," she answered.

"Was it you," Wilton asked, "who killed those sheep of ours?"

"No, that was father," she answered. "I never kill things; father does that. If I try to kill anything, I go all upside down inside. Father says it is 'wo-man-ish.'" She pronounced this word with care, as though it were one she did not quite understand. "Do you know what 'wo-man-ish' is?"

"Yes," he answered.

"Oh, tell me!" she cried.

"It's feeling all upside down inside when you have to hurt anything," he answered.

She appeared to ponder this very seriously, but, from her slight air of disappointment, she did not seem to find the explanation very satisfactory.

"But you were there, weren't you?" Wilton asked.

"I saw you all watching one night," she answered. "I went quite close to you, but you could not see because it was dark. I

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went into the field, and made all the sheep go together in the middle; and then I went away quite close to you, but you never saw because of the dark. That was why I laughed."

"And was it you," Wilton asked, "who took the butter and stuff, and who milked the cows?"

She nodded.

"Don't you know that sort of thing is stealing?" he asked.

"What is 'stealing'?" she inquired.

"Why, it's wicked!" Wilton answered.

"What is 'wicked'?" she inquired.

"Why, it's—I don't know," said Wilton.

"It is foolish to talk of things you don't know about," she informed him. "Father and I never do."

Wilton accepted the rebuke in silence. They were nearly at the crest of the down now, and, pointing with one hand, the girl said—

"There is our home."

Wilton looked round, but he could see nothing save the short turf of the wind-swept down, with here and there a stone or a mole-heap or a stunted bush.

"There," she said, seeing that he was puzzled.

Where she pointed there was a hollow in the ground, and in the shelter thus provided a few bushes struggled for their existence. Some rabbits were playing about undisturbed, and near one of the bushes was a pile of earth and stones, partly overgrown with grass—that was all. The girl said to Wilton—

"Wait here; I will tell father."

She left him and went down into the hollow. The rabbits gambolled on, taking no notice of her. She went direct to where the bushes grew, and bent down between the largest of them and the heap of earth and stones close to it. Then all at once she vanished.

Wilton waited patiently, and before very long she reappeared. She made him a sign to approach. As soon as he set foot within the hollow, the rabbits playing there scampered away.

"You are very big," the girl said to him disapprovingly, "but perhaps you can crawl through."

He could see now that the bush behind which she had disappeared hid a small cavity in the side of the hollow. To any but a close inspection it seemed nothing more; but, on looking more closely, it could be seen that it was the mouth of a large hole, as it were, the entrance to a tunnel that ran sideways behind the heap of stones and earth. The girl stooped and disappeared down this tunnel; Wilton followed on his hands and knees. The tunnel extended only about six feet, and then led into a small cave in the chalk subsoil. It was lighted by an aperture on one side that could be closed at will by a large stone. Through this opening was a view of the whole extent of the downs below, so that the inmates of this strange refuge would have early knowledge of the approach of any strangers.

The cave was full of a thin, acrid odour from a small fire of dried cowdung smouldering in one corner. The only furniture consisted of some wooden boxes, serving for table and chairs. There were some rough cooking utensils, and near the fire a man lay on a bed of dried leaves, tossing and moaning.

His face was thin and worn, and much hidden by a growth of thick, tangled, closely-cut hair. His clothing seemed composed solely of sheepskins, two or three more of which served as coverings for the bed. Over his head hung something that solved at once the mystery of the death of Mr. Dickens's bloodhound. It was a sling formed of strips of dried hide, and near by was a small pile of carefully-chosen stones, smooth and round.

One corner of the cave was partitioned off by a curtain made from a piece of old tarpaulin. Wilton guessed that this formed the bed-chamber of the girl, who was standing looking at the sick man.

"You must have a doctor," Wilton said.

"What is 'doctor'?" she asked.

"A man who makes sick people well—sometimes," Wilton explained. "Have you any water?"

She took some from a pail near. Wilton gave it to the sick man, who said suddenly and with a loud voice—

"Not guilty, my lord!"

He went on muttering to himself, tossing restlessly the while on his couch of leaves. Even to Wilton it was plain that he was sinking fast. Looking at Wilton, he said—

"Who are you?"

"A friend," Wilton answered.

"That's a lie, unless you are dead," the other answered, "for all my friends are dead. Are you dead?"

"No," Wilton answered.

"Where is Norah?" asked the sick man.

"Here, father," the girl answered.

He lay quiet then for a few minutes, seemingly soothed by her presence. Now

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and again he complained of the number of people present, declaring that they crowded the cave inconveniently.

"There is no one here except your daughter and myself," Wilton said.

"The cave is full of all the other people I have ever known," the sick man answered. "Who are you? You are the only one I don't know."

"I want to be your friend," Wilton answered. "You ought to be taken somewhere for care and attention. You are ill, you know."

"No, I am dying," the other answered. "Are you a detective?"

"No, no," Wilton said quickly.

"It wouldn't matter if you were, for I served my time," the sick man answered.

He lay quiet for a few minutes, while Wilton wondered what to do. Help could not be obtained under some hours, and Wilton doubted if this man had as many minutes to live. Presently he spoke again.

"Listen," he said. "I don't know who you are. Listen. I shall die soon. Look after Norah."

"As God shall judge me," Wilton answered solemnly.

The sick man seemed satisfied. Norah was chafing his hands gently. He said again—

"Did you ever hear of Johnson and Mayne's failure? No. Well, it made noise enough fourteen years or so ago. Johnson cut his throat. I am Mayne. They gave me five years. I don't complain. I didn't know all Johnson did, but I ought to have known, and I did know some. They let me out after four years. That is when your punishment begins—when they let you out. I starved a time, and then I went on tramp—I and my little girl. She was seven then. They had not been kind to her where she was staying. Who would be kind to a convict's daughter? Five years I was on tramp. We found this place. At first we just stopped here for a week or two at a time. For the last five years it has been our home. The stream gives us water. At night we went out to get food—sometimes from the farms. Now and again I killed an ox, but generally we took sheep or poultry, or game from the woods. With my sling I could kill plenty, or I got them when they were roosting. Then there were blackberries in the autumn, and fruit from the orchards, and plenty of vegetables. They tried to watch for us, but we never went twice to the same place in the same month, and we could see well in the dark. None of them could. Winter was worst. We could only have a fire at night, but then it was generally warm in here. Once or twice in snow we nearly starved. But Norah always got milk. When she calls the cows, they come. Don't they, Norah?"

"We are friends; they do not mind giving me their milk," the girl answered.

"Potatoes were our stand-by," the sick man continued. "In the time when they were digging them up, we used to get a store every night, and we would watch to see where they buried them, and get them afterwards when we wanted them."

"And have you lived like that for five years?" Wilton asked wonderingly.

"A good life," the sick man answered—"better than gaol and better than tramping. I have been happier here than when I was junior partner in Johnson and Mayne. Yes, a good life," he repeated—"always something doing. Why, sometimes we would go many miles in a night! I tell you, you want to spend four years in gaol to know what freedom means."

He asked for water, and Wilton gave him some. He lay quiet then, evidently much exhausted.

Norah produced some meat, dried in the sun, and gave a little to Wilton. They remained sitting by the dying man, doing what they could for him, till nearly noon, when the girl said abruptly—

"Oh, look! Father, father!" she called. "What is it, father?"

"I am going," he said slowly—"going! Good-bye, Norah!"

"Where are you going, father?" she asked.

"Not guilty, my lord!" he cried in a loud voice, and lay back, very still.

Wilton led the weeping girl outside the cave, and made her sit down there in the sun.

"We must wait a little," he said. "A little later I am going to take you to my mother."

She made no answer. After a time she fell into a light sleep, and Wilton watched beside her.

She awoke presently, and he shared with her some of the food he had provided himself with before starting on this adventure.

"We must start now," he said presently; "we have twelve miles to go." She rose obediently.

Hand in hand they went. Behind them lay the vast loneliness of the downs, shrouded in the softness of the falling night.

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JOHN.

By AMBER REEVES.

JOHN looked gloomily down into his top drawer. He was putting on his Etons, and he could not find his rotten collar-stud. It must have fallen into the drawer, because that was where everything always fell, and now it was lost for ever, as the top drawer was his very own, and the maids never touched it.

He felt that this was the time to show manly annoyance, so he said, "Hang the beastly thing!" and kicked savagely at a boot that was lying on the floor. Unhappily, it was a boot that he was going to wear, and he followed it into its corner and put it on with some bitterness.

Meanwhile he had to deal with this affair of the stud. Selina would have given him a new one, but Selina would want to know what he was doing in his Etons, and where he was going, little matters that were not for the ears of sisters. Or she might try to disturb his drawer. It was no good asking Selina—he would have to find something for himself. Surely there must be a hundred ways of beating a small thing like a collar-stud.

The first idea that came to him was to tie his collar with a piece of string. He found a nice piece in the pocket of his trousers, not very sticky, and he began to thread it through the stud-holes. But before his attack began, his collar had been clean, and the end of the string merely flattened itself against the starchy slit. Selina would have used a needle, but he hadn't any needle, and he wasn't going to do things like a girl. In the end he fell back on a paper-clip he had bagged from his father's desk. It was the brass kind, with a round flat end and two tails that you push through the slit and then bend out; they make excellent studs if you remember to put cotton-wool inside your collar to prevent the points from sticking into your neck.

As his collar was now somewhat grimy, he put on his best tie to carry it off. Then he opened his savings-box with his penknife by the dodge he knew, and counted his money. There was one-and-eightpence and some farthings. The farthings he rejected, as usual, because he thought they were low; the rest he put into his trousers pocket. He told himself that, if he did not wash his hands, it was because Selina would never let him alone about them; he did not remember his hair.

He went downstairs by the banisters, and was fortunate in finding the front hall empty. Though he ventured into the dining-room, it was merely to see the time, and he was annoyed as well as startled when a shrill voice called along the passage: "Now, Master John, you leave that cupboard alone!" He did not wish to attract attention, so he only replied: "Wasn't touching your beastly cupboard!" And, having got his hat, he slipped out of the front door as quickly and as quietly as he could. Once in the street, unless he had the rotten bad luck to meet mother, he was safe.

He had nearly reached the station when he saw that Towser was following him. Towser was a sort of fox-terrier Uncle George had given him last birthday, when he was ten, and Towser was the joy of his heart. He could not take the animal back again—he had no time, and the risk was too great—and Towser refused to go when he was told. Happily, the District Railway allows dogs.

Towser must have known that he was doing wrong, for he was very ingratiating. He jumped about the pavement like a puppy, and put his muddy paws on to John's trousers in the most affectionate and charming manner. "Down, Towser, down!" John said, and felt that you couldn't have found a prettier dog in all Kensington Gardens.

He got out at St. James's Park, for he knew that one has to begin with a meeting at Caxton Hall, but when he arrived at the door, much excited by the delightful prominence of the police, he saw that he could not hope to get in without a ticket. He asked, therefore, if he might wait in the entrance, as he had been told to bring his sister home again in case she should

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want to be arrested. The ladies guarding the door were busy, and only laughed, and he got back into the darkest corner he could, and waited.

Presently, inside, the meeting began. He heard murmurs and then tremendous cheers. It was clear that great things were on foot. Presently the door of the hall opened, and some ladies came out—they were almost running. "The deputation will start in a minute!" they cried. "Only a minute now!" "They're coming out by the platform door!" They hurried past him into the street, and everyone ran with them. "Shall you follow?" he heard one lady ask. "Of course," said the other, and they gripped hands. John resolved that he would follow, too.

They were in the street now, with people swarming out from the meeting behind them, and an open space ringed by policemen in front. Up all the roads were crowds that the police kept back. John could not see the deputation appear because he was not tall enough, but everyone round him was shouting, and with the women next him he ran to follow before the police should have closed in.

For the next half hour his outlook was limited. He walked because the people round him were walking, but he could not in the least see where he was going. Sometimes he would catch sight of the stripes on a policeman's cuff between the back of one feminine coat and the buttons of the next, and he was aware of surrounding helmets, but the delightful scuffling that must have marked their passage—he judged from what he heard—was hidden from him. His enthusiasm for the cause began to ebb, and he felt that he was being unfairly treated because he was not taller.

Every minute the press grew closer—it became exceedingly difficult to see anything below the level of one's chin—but as the deputation slowly won its way into Victoria Street, he realised that, for the moment, the most salient feature in his life was an elbow. Its owner was agitated, and at each crisis of her emotion the elbow caught him fairly in the chest. If he swerved to avoid its coming, the brim of his straw hat caught the shoulder of a very tall lady on the other side, and the hat jerked itself forward over his eyes. Nor was it always easy to lift his arm in order to replace it. The only protest he could make was to kick her heels a little. And when she turned round, it was not to apologise, but to say with the brightest of smiles: "Are you coming with us, little boy? Don't be afraid—it's all right. You can take hold of my arm if you like."

The humiliation was so great that John's throat grew sore. He was sorry he had not kicked harder, but he remembered his manners and did not answer back. The next ten minutes of their progress were poisoned for him.

It seemed hours before the column came to a stop, so that he could see something of his whereabouts. On each side of the group of women were several rows of police; then his view was stopped by the shining flanks of horses. Behind their uniformed riders the fronts of buildings stretched up into the sky, but though many of the windows were crowded, they were too far off to afford the interest of detail. Looking behind, John could see more police and a receding row of lamp-posts each holding a friendly light. But the interest of the evening lay in front, and he wriggled forward accordingly in order to get level with the leaders of the deputation. Once arrived, he beheld a sight that roused his blood again, for there in rank before him were nearly all the policemen in the world. He corrected his estimate when he remembered Scotland and the Colonies and Ireland. He had a vague idea that you would always have to keep police in Ireland, but the mass of them there before him seemed as imposing as the British Army itself. He was impressed, too, because they all looked particularly good-natured. Far behind them the bluish masses of the Houses of Parliament rose over their heads, and the clock of the clock tower shone bright. Fifteen minutes to eight! He ought to have been finishing his lessons in preparation for supper.

Even now, with the enemy so near, the time passed slowly. The crowd were enjoying themselves outside, but here all was still. Some of the ladies were talking to the police, the rest were talking to each other. They laughed a good deal, and he could not avoid the conclusion that they were nervous. Some of them were even plainly terrified, and, with the critical appreciation of one who has seen fights at school, he wondered what their form would be when the thrilling moment came. He heard one woman say to her neighbour that those were the horses. You must look out for them, or you got trampled. There was a way, though, of pulling them down by the bridles—you caught hold of a strap underneath their chins, or something. Mrs. Cameron knew. That interested him—it sounded like a real war—but most of the conversation he heard was not at all amusing.

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At last he himself gave rise to an incident. A zealous policeman, also somewhat bored by the prevalent inaction, reminded himself that the proper place for little boys was in the crowd behind. "'Ere, you," he said, "come out of that! You ain't the deppitation! You'll be getting into trouble if you don't come out!"

"Out," said John—"out there?" He nodded his head vaguely at the mass of police in front.

All the ladies laughed, the policeman condescended to smile, and a moment later John saw the joke himself. That was the House of Commons he had nodded towards—he had been witty!

The policeman pressed him no more, for clearly it would be more difficult to get a small boy out of the square than to keep the ladies in. He merely remarked, "All right! You wait till I catches you! They'll marry you when you grow up!" and resumed his place in the line.

While John stared wearily round, wondering why on earth they were waiting, the clock struck eight. As he turned towards the sound, he saw a woman detach herself from the rest and run forward. She was very stupid—she was running straight at the wall of policemen. One of them smilingly held out his hands and caught her wrists. Then John realised that this was the rush. The other women were running past him, there was a great shouting, and then a terrific squash. To struggle was so hopeless that it seemed silly. Even the deputation's shouts of "Votes for Women!" were lost in the general tumult. Then, while he was wondering whom he should himself attack, the pressure relaxed, and all that was left of the deputation was a dozen panting little ladies being led away by twice that number of policemen.

It was over, and he had never struck a blow! His name would not be in the papers—not altogether a bad thing when one thought of Father.

"Well," said the policeman who had accosted before, "you still 'ere? You're a brave 'un, you are! Why aren't you took up with the others? 'Fraid they'd kiss you in court, I s'pose! Now, you cut along—the real rush'll be here in a minute!"

For one bold instant he longed to hit the policeman there and then, but at the back of his mind was the restraining knowledge that, if he was sent to prison, he might not be out in time for the school sports. He thought he had a chance of the junior hundred yards this year. "You needn't ever be afraid of being kissed!" he said, and ran. The policeman did not pursue him, for *he* was pretending not to have heard.

For a long time John pushed and squirmed among the crowd. If there was a real row, he wanted to be in it, but he could not find out where it was. The crowd was rough, and there was a good deal of fighting. He continually caught the word "unemployed," a term which was associated in his mind with his father's voice saying "vagabonds and ruffians." The thought of his father made him wonder what Selina was having for supper; sometimes on Wednesdays they had scrambled eggs.

Then, while he was clinging to a railing as the crowd swept by, the thought of Towser flashed across his mind. All other thoughts were drowned in anguish. Where was Towser? He did not even know where he had seen him last. And Towser had never been in Westminster before! He would lose his way in the crowd, and they would never see him again!

His cry was involuntary. "Towser! Oh, where is Towser?"

"Oo's Towser?" asked a voice beside him. "Is 'e a 'ound?"

"Oh, yes!" cried John. "I've lost him! He's my dog!"

"Oh, 'e's your dog!" And then there was a pause. After a minute the voice resumed: "You come along wiv me, and p'raps I'll find 'im for you." A large hand with a queer texture grasped his own, and John saw that a broad man in corduroys was dragging him through the crowd. In five minutes they were in a quieter street, where conversation was possible. Then they halted, and the broad man confronted him. "Look 'ere," he said, "can you keep a promise?"

"Yes," said John.

"Then give me 'arf-a-crown and promise not to arst no questions, and I'll find yer dog for yer. Done?"

"I haven't got half-a-crown!" wailed John.

The man seemed disgusted.

"Well, what 'ave you got?" he asked.

"Only a shilling," said John.

"You carn't expec' me to find much f'r a shillin'," replied the man slowly, after a meditative moment; "but look 'ere—give me the bob, and I'll do what I can for yer."

John handed over his shilling in good faith, and they walked together along the street. The man whistled cheerfully to himself. Presently it occurred to John that he had better give his companion some idea of

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Towser. He began to explain diffidently that Towser was a terrier, and an easy dog to know, because he had only a little black stump for a tail—the other way round from a rabbit—and he always came when he was called.

The man did not pay much attention. "It'll be all right, you see," he said. "I'm death on dogs!" After that he remarked that his name was Shiny Bill, and that everybody knew him round there; but he did not encourage conversation. John supposed that he must be a great man in his own way, perhaps a member of secret societies that had passwords. He admired his spotted neckcloth and the extreme dilapidation of his cap. At home they were angry if he let Towser even jump for his own cap, though it hardly ever got torn.

Suddenly the great man came to a stop. "See that pub?" he said. "I'm going in there to see a friend of mine about your dog. You wait 'ere." And he hurried off.

John waited for a time that seemed longer than his whole life. The street was quiet, and the only thing that he found to amuse himself with was trying to keep his hands warm by hitting them across his chest as cabmen do.

Before Shiny Bill came, John had become vaguely apprehensive, and when the great one did return, he seemed a little surly. "You still 'ere?" he remarked. "No, I ain't found your sweet little dog. Can't expec' everything f'r a bob, you know. P'raps 'e's dead by this time!"

John's mind lit with suspicion. He believed suddenly that Shiny Bill was cheating him, but he was prudent enough not to say so. While he was searching for some courteous and yet effective form of protest, his attention was attracted to a man in a red jersey who was advancing along the pavement.

"Good evening, Tom!" said the man.

Shiny Bill did not take this in good part. "'Ullo, Geaser!" he remarked. "Didn't expec' to have the pleasure of your cump'ny. That the coat you made outer yer ole mother's flannel petticoat they give 'er f'r charity las' Christmas?"

"Oh, I'm all right," said the man. "How are you?"

John saw his chance. "He's helping me," he said. "I gave him a shilling to find my dog for me."

"Oh, did you?" said Bill angrily, before the other man could speak. "And now you gives the show away! Didn't I tell you to keep yer face shut? If this is 'ow yer goin' to be'ave, I'm off!" And, before they could stop him, he had slipped round the corner.

John gave a gasp of despair, and would have run after the traitor, but the man in red held him back.

"No use," he said. "'E's a bad lot. If you've lost your dog, you'd better wait till morning, and go to the 'ome at Battersea."

"But Towser will be miserable," said John; "he's not accustomed to being out all night. I can't go home without Towser."

The man in red looked down at John's dirty face, and said he didn't know as he could do anything. They both stood in silence for a minute, and then the thought of an all-night vigil pushed John to say that he was still the possessor of twopence. At this the man brightened, and said that he knew of a coffee-stall near by, and they went towards it together without speaking. Presently they could see its naphtha lights flaring down the road. The man in red stopped. "There," he said, "I can't come any further—I'm late. But look here—if you don't mind me asking you, are you saved?"

"Saved?" said John dimly.

"Do you love the Lord?"

"Oh, yes!" replied John with assurance, lifting his eyes gravely, as he had seen Selina do on a similar occasion.

The man gripped his hand. "That's good news, brother," he said. "The Lord be with you!" And he walked cheerily away.

For a moment John felt an inclination to giggle. Then a terrible possibility occurred to him. Suppose, after all, God had let him lose Towser to punish him for his sins! But now, if only he could find Towser, he would mend his ways. His fancy showed him a John who laboured conscientiously over his lessons with clean hands, who came down in time for breakfast, who never kept peppermints in his desk, who never sang "Children of Darkness" down the area stairs or used Selina's handkerchiefs for paint-rags—a courteous, brave, long-suffering John. It would be a great change; the people at home would miss his old high spirits. He could not help feeling that he had got the worst of it—that he might have been punished in another way—but anyway now he had no choice, and he promised fervently to be different in future, with a rider to the effect that, if Towser were not found, he would never go home again. Then, with a lighter heart and a feeling that his debts were paid, he proceeded to the coffee-stall.

It was bright and tempting; there were buns and sandwiches, coloured fluids in glass bottles, and a shining urn that steamed. A tired, untidy woman was making a purchase as he came up.

"Pavemint and 'arf 'o 'ot," she said, proffering a penny.

"No 'arves 'ere," answered the man behind the counter. "Don't go in fer fardins. Bread an' butter 'apn'y, small cup 'apn'y, there y'are!" And he pushed the cup and saucer across to her.

John asked for a jam tart and some ginger-beer.

"That's twopence!" observed a little man who was eating a sandwich.

"Well, an' if it is," said the stall-keeper fiercely, "I don't want any o' your lip, do I? Since when 'ave I 'ad the honour of employin' you to tell custimers the prices?"

"Sorry, I'm sure," said the small man, "on'y I thought p'raps you was puttin' up your prices on account of this 'ere Bill."

No one seemed to catch his meaning, so he addressed himself to the untidy woman. "You'd say ginger-beer's a temprince drink now," he explained to her. "Temprince drink indeed! I don't fink! 'Ow much alc'ol—'ow much pure alc'ol 'ud you say there was in ginger-beer?"

She did not answer, and the stall-keeper reasserted his authority. "No politics 'ere!" he said. "I won't never allow politics at my stall! Spillin' their coffee about!" he added to himself.

"Right you are!" said the small man mildly. "But this 'ere Bill——"

There was silence for a little, and then John, returning his glass, asked if any of them had seen his dog.

No, they 'adn't, they said, but they were interested. He had to tell them what sort of a dog. In the end, opinion was unanimous—he must ask the coppers and then go to the 'ome. The little man informed him that there was always a copper just round there on the Embankment, and he'd better go at once. They all watched him go with the greatest friendliness. He went reluctantly, for he did not feel at all inclined to take the little man's advice. The coffee-stall was cheerful and looked warm, policemen have a forbidding way with small boys, and the Embankment, when he reached it, was exceedingly cold. He walked with lagging steps towards the policeman.

At first he was not very cordially received. "Lost your dog?" he was asked. "Where did you lose it?"

"Somewhere round the Caxton Hall, I think," he said, suddenly aware of his own want of acumen.

"Well, you won't find it here, then," he was told.

This seemed indubitable, and he received it in silence. After a minute's thought he resolved to go back to the hall. He did not dare to disturb the policeman's splendid calm for the second time in order to ask his way, so he wandered towards the parapet of the Embankment.

A voice at his elbow made him turn—the policeman had followed him.

"Look 'ere, you go 'ome, and look for your dog to-morrow," the resonant voice was saying.

John faced the suggestion squarely. "I can't!" he said; "I haven't any money, and I *won't* go home without Towser."

The policeman reflected, and then, pulling out a note-book, he asked for John's address. A further silence followed his reply.

"You won't go 'ome?" the deep voice said again.

John shook his head. No, he wouldn't. He stared at the lamp-lit river to his left, and renewed his resolve. He was tired, he was cold, above all, he was dreadfully sleepy, but he would not go home.

Suddenly, through the misty veil in which the sleepiness seemed to wrap his senses, he became aware that the policeman was violently active. A moment later the deep voice told him that he was to get into this cab.

He woke again, spurred by his conscience. "I'm not allowed to take cabs."

"But you've never been put into a cab before by a policeman, have you?" he was persuaded. "You get into this cab, and you'll get your dog all right. And look here—this is my number."

John climbed into the cab. As he looked back, he received a last impression of the policeman, towering, a black majestic mass, against the lights of the Surrey shore. John thought he heard him laugh—a harsh, heavy laugh. He remembered nothing more.

Suddenly there was a great noise. John woke with a start and peered stupidly about him. Someone was shouting down from above: "'Ere y'are, sir—get out!"

He was out of the cab before he recognised the door that confronted him. Then he saw that he had been betrayed—the cabman had driven him home.

He thought of flight, then he remembered that he could not pay the fare. A moment later he was staggering back from the onset

of Towser's joy. When he could see again, he realised that Selina stood beside him.

"Oh, John," she said, "I *am* glad you're back! You will catch it, though! Father's in the most awful state! And you know mother doesn't allow you to let Towser lick your face!"

A cold feeling went slowly down John's back. He had been forgetting what parents are. They would never understand about the cab. Selina was dancing about, and holding his arm, and trying to hug him. He wanted a little sympathy, but the cabman was looking, so he pulled his arm away and merely said: "I'm glad to see Towser found his way home."

Then he went manfully up the steps to the front door and Father.

"John asked for a jam tart and some ginger-beer."

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THE NEW RECRUIT.

By HENRY HUME.

HERE were five of them waiting just outside the orderly-room at the depot of the —— Regiment. Their boots were down at the heels, their civilian clothes were much too thin and worn to resist the biting east wind which pricked and stung them through and through, and the expression on each of their faces was one of callous indifference.

Two of them—one a golf caddie and the other a bargeman—were lounging on the bench, whilst the other three—consisting of a ship's cook, a grocer's assistant, and a farm-labourer—were slouching close by. Not a single word passed between them, and they appeared completely indifferent as to their immediate surroundings or their coming fate. Scarves were round the necks of each, their coat collars were turned up, and they all wore caps except the ship's cook, who wore a bowler.

Standing by their side was the recruiting-sergeant. He was a well-set-up man, distinctly smart in appearance, suitably provided with impertinent "h's." His moustache never failed to be agreeably waxed when on duty, and his figure was exceptionally thin, considering the post which he had now held for some years. The only other person present in this little group was the commanding officer's orderly, who had just returned from the officers' mess, where he had been sent to inform the commanding officer that all papers were ready for signature.

The barrack square was alive with little squads of recruits being bustled from one end to the other. The officers had fallen out, and had retired to the mess in order to read the papers, and the sergeant-major, who was in command, was busily engaged dropping little corrective and instructive remarks as he passed by each instructor or squad.

"Well, my lads, 'ow does you like the look hof it?" said the recruiting-sergeant, as he drew the attention of the five men to the barrack square.

The caddie and the grocer's assistant grinned, the farm-labourer stared, the bargeman took no notice, and the ship's cook blew into his hands to try and keep them warm.

"Well, it'll keep one warm, if it don't do nothink else," said the ship's cook.

"Warm, my lad! You won't 'ave much chance of being cold when you get halong with Sergeant Huggins," said the sergeant, with a recruiting wink.

All the men, on this remark, began to show a little sign of interest, except the farm-labourer, who "splodged" himself on to the bench, where he remained, still gazing at the barrack square.

"Sergeant 'Uggins—who's 'e?" said the ship's cook.

"Sergeant Huggins will be your hinstructor, my boy. He'll keep yer movin'."

"Will he really, sargint?" said the caddie in a voice of excitement.

"No, not you, my lad," said the recruiting-sergeant. "You're for the Special Reserve, you are. You'll go halong with Corporal Scragg. 'E won't hurt you."

"Wot abaht me?" asked the grocer's assistant.

"You're Special Reserve, too. You ain't half big enough for the line, you ain't. However, the gymnasums will soon make men of the likes o' you," said the sergeant. And then, turning to the farm-labourer, who up to the present had shown no interest, he added: "You'll be for Sergeant Huggins too, you will."

"Eh?" said the farm-labourer, after he had removed his eyes very slowly from the barrack square.

"I said as 'ow you'd be under Sergeant Huggins."

"Oo's Sergeant 'Uggins?"

"Lumme, we've just been talkin' on 'im for the last five minutes! You'll have to 'urry yourself, you will. We ain't got no bags o' time to collect our wits in the Army, you know."

"Ain't we?" And again the farm-labourer fixed his eyes on the square.

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"You're a caution, you are," added the sergeant. "My word, when I was a lad—— Look out—'ere comes the commanding orficer!"

The approach of the commanding officer put a stop to any further conversation. The recruiting-sergeant hurriedly arranged the raw recruits into some sort of attitude of attention, and then he drew himself up with those clean and sharp movements which end with a sharp click of the heels and the finished salute, in which the right hand describes a neat and accurate little circle just before it reaches the cap. The farm-labourer's legs remained about five inches further apart than any of the others, and he touched his cap some little time after the commanding officer had passed. The caddie was filled with delight and blushed deeply when the commanding officer recognised him; but it hurt him very much removing the smile to the order of the recruiting-sergeant, who "told him off" severely for smiling at an officer.

One by one these five recruits were marched in before the commanding officer, to be finally approved for the forces of the Crown. Their references were all found to be satisfactory, and it took but little time to verify their next-of-kin and for the commanding officer to add the last few signatures to their recruiting papers.

A few minutes later they left the orderly-room, and once again the farm-labourer, with an expressionless face, fixed his eyes on the barrack square.

* * * * *

The little squad of line recruits were standing easy. It was only the second day after their enlistment, and they were still in their thin, threadbare civilian clothes and worn-out boots. They were taking advantage of their temporary freedom in the ranks in watching their comrades battling with the elementary preliminaries of soldiering in the other squads, in admiring the sergeant-major, or in following the movements of the orderly officer as he first kicked some loose stones, and then looked at his watch to discover how many more tiring minutes remained before he could escape from the monotony of the barrack square. But the farm-labourer took no notice of any of these things. With his legs apart and his hands clasped behind his back, he remained at the "Stand easy," and followed every movement of Sergeant Huggins, his instructor, with an angry and surly look.

Sergeant Huggins was as smart as any rather-inclined-to-be-stout sergeant could be. His movements were crisp, his appearance was fresh, his calves did full justice to the Service puttie, and his "Wan—tau—three!" was a pleasure to listen to. He offered a strange contrast to the undergrown and, no doubt, previously underfed lads in his squad; he was, in fact, a living advertisement of what some kind of national service can do for the youths of the day. Humour sparkled from under his very dark and bushy eyebrows, and the rotundness of his figure clearly expressed kindness. He had been specially selected for drilling the newly-joined recruits, owing to the quick way in which he was able to mould them into men. Every word of his command was followed up by those sharp little jerks of the disengaged hand which denoted the correct time for each movement of the body or rifle. He had the art of tuition born in his system. Better than all of these, however, he nearly always gained the affection of the recruits as well. And yet the farm-labourer stared at him with a look which clearly denoted one of hate.

The fact of the matter was that the farm-labourer could not accustom himself to his new surroundings. The spasmodic energy of the barrack square jarred on him. The ever-present "As you were," the constant corrections, and the difficulties of trying to accelerate in every stage of life mystified him. He resented the incessant supervision under which he always found himself, and the way in which he was so often spoken to by his non-commissioned officers, especially Sergeant Huggins, galled him. The farm-labourer, in fact, was a very unhappy man.

Sergeant Huggins suddenly stopped his little red-robin walk up and down in front of the squad, drew himself smartly up, cleared his throat, gave the caution, and then called the squad to attention in his own inimitable manner. All went well except for the farm-labourer, who was at least a second late in getting his hands in line with and just behind the seam of his trousers. "There you goes again!" said the sergeant in a voice of despair. "You ain't 'arf a caution, you ain't! Yusterday I 'ad to tork to you about loafin' about like a dog lyin' down in his basket, and 'ere you are to-day movin' like a fly caught in a dish o' treacle!" The others in the squad enjoyed this little joke immensely, but the farm-labourer only stared with a dull and soured look.

"You can't move no quicker than a bag

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of sand, you can't!" continued Sergeant Huggins, distinctly annoyed that his last little pleasantry had not received universal response. "If the 'ole bloomin' Army moved as slow as you, we wouldn't be able to start to fight till arter peace was declared!"

But still the farm-labourer failed to respond, and Sergeant Huggins, disregarding him as apparently hopeless, turned his attention to the remainder of the squad, though it hurt him badly to see the pitiful way in which the wretched farm-labourer carried out his movements.

The climax came a few seconds later, when the squad were being instructed to turn about by numbers. The swinging of the body round on the right heel and the left toe, and remaining in a most awkward position till the word "Tau!" permitted him to bring his left foot up to his right, was more than the farm-labourer could manage. In the first motion he lost his balance, nearly fell, and succeeded also in upsetting the equilibrium of the other recruits on his left. This was more than the sergeant could possibly bear, and in a furious passion he rushed up to the wretched recruit.

"That's right—knock the 'ole squad abaht! You'll be wanting to upset me next!" And, unable to check himself in his loss of temper, he shook the unfortunate boy—in fact, he almost struck him—and at this moment the bugle sounded for the parade to be dismissed.

The farm-labourer visibly scowled and clenched his teeth, and a thrill of revolt went right through him. He went through the few motions of the "dismiss" almost dazed, though he heard the remarks of Sergeant Huggins as he tried to think.

"That's right—late the 'ole way through! You ain't got no brain, that's wot's the matter with you," said the sergeant; and in disgust he turned away to leave the barrack square.

The recruit, trembling with fury, stared at him for a few seconds, and he then started to dog the footsteps of the sergeant. Moving slowly at first, he gradually increased his pace, and, when he had almost caught the instructor up, he suddenly stopped.

"Sargint!" he called very quietly.

"'Ullo, wot does yer want now?" said Sergeant Huggins, intensely surprised, when he turned round, to see this raw recruit staring at him with a look of defiance.

"You 'it me," calmly replied the recruit.

"'It you? Wot d'ye mean?"

"Wot I says. You 'it me."

Sergeant Huggins was quite nonplussed, and he couldn't refrain from bursting into laughter.

"I says you 'it me, and I's goin' to give you the biggest thrashin' you've ever 'ad," slowly added the recruit, with the same cold expression.

"Look 'ere, my lad, it ain't no use yer talkin' like that. I don't want to put you in the guard-room, but——"

"I says I's goin' to give you the biggest thrashin' you've ever 'ad," again said the recruit.

Sergeant Huggins stared at the boy for a few seconds, and then he could not prevent himself being struck by the humour of the situation. The very thought of this raw, hulking lout threatening him—formerly one of the best boxers in the regiment—with the biggest thrashing of his life, appealed to him immensely. It was no use. Disciplinarian as he was, and try as he could, he couldn't keep it back. He simply had to roar with laughter, and it was in the midst of this laughter that he suddenly made up his mind.

"Look 'ere, my lad," he said quite kindly, "suppose we reverse things. Instead o' me running yer up before the commanding officer for threatenin' a non-commissioned officer, and gettin yer put in prison, suppose I give *you* the biggest thrashin' *you've* ever 'ad in your life."

"Wot's that you say?" said the recruit.

"I says that I ain't goin' to put you in prison, but I'm goin' to thrash you, and I rely on you, after it's all over, not to get me into prison neither."

"I ain't a-goin' to put yer in prison. I'm goin' to thrash you, that's all." And the recruit slowly turned away and started to walk across the barrack square.

"Come back 'ere, my lad," called Sergeant Huggins; and, as the recruit again got up to him, he added: "You come up to the company storeroom at two o'clock this arternoon, and then we'll see as to oo's goin' to thrash oo." And Sergeant Huggins strutted off, delighted at the way in which he had made up his mind to teach this extraordinary boy a lesson.

The farm-labourer smiled as he walked across the barrack square.

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There was but little room in the company storeroom. At one end was the store-man's iron bed-cot, and a certain amount of accommodation was required for the spare Service blankets, surplus kits, and equipment,

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besides the arm-rack, which occupied the far end of the room. Sergeant Huggins, still amused, awaited the arrival of the recruit, and he determined to let the lad off as lightly as possible. He had turned the whole matter over in his mind, and had come to the conclusion that he had perhaps been a little bit

"'I don't want to 'urt you,' said the sergeant."

too severe and exacting in his treatment of the poor, uneducated country yokel. Heavy, slow, and deliberate steps outside clearly announced the arrival of the recruit, and a second later he entered the room. His face was flushed, and for the first time a sign of life was very distinct on his sullen countenance.

"Come along, my lad; you'll find the gloves lyin' on the store-man's bed-cot," cheerily said Sergeant Huggins.

"Wot's them for?" said the recruit.

"Well, my boy, I don't want to 'urt you," said the sergeant.

"No, but I's goin' to thrash you," said the recruit; and he took up his position in the centre of the room and stared the sergeant full in the face.

Sergeant Huggins could not help feeling somewhat nettled at the insolent way in which he suddenly found himself being treated, and he felt his temper gradually getting the better of him.

"Are you ready?" said the recruit, and he clenched his fists.

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"Ready, my boy? In course I am. Blessed if you don't want a real good hidin'. It'll do you good and make you think."

"I tells you I's going to thrash *you*." And, with his face set with a look of hate, he approached the sergeant in an aggressive but somewhat unorthodox manner.

There were no preliminaries. The sergeant at once tried to get through the apparently open defence of the recruit, but, to his amazement, his blow was successfully parried, and he received a nasty swinging blow on the lower part of his face, which dazed him considerably. Worse than that, however, the little sparring which had already taken place had quickly proved to him that a quiet life at a regimental depot was hardly conducive to good training, and instead of being the quick fighter that he thought himself, and knew himself, to be some years previously, he was now slow and stilted. He was, moreover, astounded at the sure defence of the recruit and the sound tactics which he employed. A smart tap on the nose, followed up by a well-directed undercut, clearly pointed out to him that he had met his master. He braced himself up for a final effort, but his only reward was a stinging blow from the recruit which landed right between his eyes. He staggered back and fell to the ground.

"Well, 'as you 'ad enough?" quietly said the recruit to the sergeant, as the latter opened his eyes.

"Wait a minute, my lad—I'm thinkin'," said the sergeant, as he again fell back with his eyes closed.

The recruit looked at him, and then slowly went across the room to fetch some water which was beside the store-man's bed-cot. The sergeant allowed him to bathe his wounds for a minute or two, after which he opened his eyes and slowly raised himself from the floor. He staggered a little as he rose, but the recruit assisted him.

"Thank you, my lad," said the sergeant.

"Sargint, I 'ad to do it, but wot's goin' to 'appen now?"

Sergeant Huggins, who had made up his mind long before this, tried to smile with his bruised face. He turned to the recruit and shook him by the hand.

"My lad, you're a well-plucked one, after all. I see now that I bullied you into this. But look 'ere, my son, don't you think that you can play these games too often. When I was a lad, I used to be able to fight a bit myself, and my temper was a bit 'urried like. One of our sargints bullied me, and I struck 'im. He run me up before the commanding officer, and I got dished out with six months' 'ard. I served my time, and it nearly killed me. If it 'adn't been for my company orficer, I would probably have gone all any'ow when I came out. 'E put me *right* again—'e understood, 'e did. Now, I saw you meant business, and that you intended to strike me. Well, if I hadn't allowed you to do it like this 'ere, you'd 'a' gone to prison, too, and, lumme, if I'd 'a' known that you was a-goin' to make jelly o' me, I believe I would 'a' let you gone! I should like to larf 'ere, but I can't—it's too painful like. Now, my lad, you learn wot I says, and you keeps your fists to yourself in the future. It'll pay yer. You've given me your thrashin', but don't you go tryin' the same on all the others."

"Sargint, I'm sorry, but I do try on that barrack square, I does really," said the recruit. "Lumme, 'ow I wish I could 'ave understood you on the square, when you was always a-tellin' of me off, as well as I understands you now."

"That's all right, my lad. Nothink like a fight to make two blokes understand one another. I likes makin' sort of pals of my 'rookies,' I does, and I think I have got another recruit in you who——" And suddenly becoming dizzy from the severe treatment which he had received, he reeled in a dead faint and fell back into the recruit's arms.

The farm-labourer carried him across the room and placed him on the store-man's bed-cot.

"Yus, sargint," he said in a quiet undertone, as he bathed the sergeant's forehead, "I'll be one of your new recruits, but, lumme, I 'ad to thrash you!"

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ENGLAND'S STORY IN PORTRAIT AND PICTURE.

XXXI. THE REIGN OF ANNE.

1702–1714.

THE new queen, though she was no longer a young woman, and had done nothing remarkable, came to the throne in a burst of popularity. She was an Englishwoman: both her parents had been born in England, and one of them of unbroken English ancestry. She was a sincere Churchwoman. She had not been very well treated by her brother-in-law, William of Orange, and only towards the end of his life had civil relations been resumed between them. All this was in her favour; and perhaps still more favourable was the fact that her husband, Prince George of Denmark, though an excellent person enough, was a nonentity. It was said that James II. declared that he tried him drunk and he tried him sober, but there was nothing in him; and certainly all he had to say, to that king's contemptuous indignation, when nobles began to desert to William, was "*Est-il possible?*" Which, after all, was a judicious observation, committing him to nothing. He certainly had no desire to be a king, and a prince he remained to the end of his life. The life of George and Anne was saddened by the death of all their children; but they were an attached couple, and set an example to the court and people which had not been set since the reign of Charles I.

ANNE, QUEEN OF ENGLAND 1702–1714. BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

Anne came to the throne with a very proper idea of her constitutional position. She had no desire to interfere in party politics, but she did not take pains to conceal her own opinions, which were those befitting a granddaughter of the Royal Martyr and of the great historian of the Civil War. The system of party government, by which the ministry is chosen from that party which has a majority in the House of Commons, and remains in office so long as that majority exists, begun under William III., and illustrated by the position of "The Whig Junto," was consolidated by her wise and restrained exercise of her constitutional rights. Anne waited to purge her ministry of Whig statesmen till a large majority at a general election gave the Tories claim to power. Then she gave them office, and they remained there, through several vicissitudes, till the end of her reign. Anne was the true consolidator of the party system and the homogeneous ministry to which we are accustomed.

At the beginning of the reign a mainly Whig ministry was in office. Godolphin—to

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whom men gave the nickname of "Volpone," after Ben Jonson's prince of avarice—was Treasurer, and John Churchill, Earl of Marlborough, was at once made a duke and captain-general of the Army. The queen's attachment to the beautiful Sarah Jennings, the adored wife of Marlborough, became a political fact. The record of the friendship goes back to the time when Anne was a little girl, brought up by her stepmother, Mary of Modena, and Sarah was a brilliant maid of honour to the royal duchess. "We used to play together when she was a child. She even then expressed a particular fondness for me, and this inclination increased with our years." Such is the duchess's record. "I was often at court, and the princess always distinguished me by the pleasure she took to honour me preferably to others with her conversation and confidence. In all her parties for amusement, I was sure by her choice to be one." The attachment was kept up all through the reigns of Anne's father and sister. When Marlborough was in disgrace with William, Anne received a sharp reproof from Mary for still keeping her friend about her, in a letter which, no doubt, the stern William inspired, if he did not dictate it. "I tell you plainly Lady Marlborough must not continue with you in the circumstances in which her lord is. Never was anybody suffered to live at court in my Lord Marlborough's circumstances." Anne was so fond of "Mrs. Freeman"—as she called her, taking herself the name of Mrs. Morley—that she said: "I swear I could live on bread and water between four walls with her without repining." They both knew that it was the stern William who was at fault when the gentle Mary refused to see her sister: and it was not till after the queen's death that the king patched up a peace of politeness with the princess, whom he could not prevent being his heir. But there was no cordiality between them, and when the Duke of Gloucester, the last and brightest of Anne's children, died at the age of eleven, it was more than two months before the king took any notice of the fact. Thus Anne clung more and more to her friend. Her husband was a dull fellow enough, not without sagacity now and then, but uninteresting, unsympathetic, and un-English, while Anne herself was full of sentiment and kindliness, and full of national feeling to the core. She was doubly linked to her friends by the death of their only son, an undergraduate at Cambridge. She lavished on them very office and emolument she could think of: it is said that, soon after the beginning of the new reign, Marlborough and his wife received sixty thousand pounds a year of State money. And this was only the beginning of greatness.

GEORGE, PRINCE OF DENMARK, CONSORT OF QUEEN ANNE. BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

The queen began well. Her ministry was still in appearance Whig. In spite of the queen's Tory sentiments, she knew too well the position of a constitutional monarch to interfere with the political system in which she found herself involved. She was a strong Churchwoman, but the only way in which she showed her sympathy at first, besides, of course, her scrupulous obedience to the Church's rules, was in dismissing the committee of bishops by which William had been guided in ecclesiastical patronage. She threw herself into her new duties with a devotion and a personal kindliness which delighted everyone who knew that she was really a broken-hearted, childless woman, and could not but contrast her brightness with William's severe reticence. "She received all that came to her," says Onslow, the Speaker, "in so gracious a manner that they went from her highly satisfied with her goodness and her obliging deportment, for she hearkened with attention to everything that was said to her." And when she spoke, what a contrast to William's "disgusting dryness"! Even Burnet, the greatest of

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"THE CORONATION OF ANNE, 1702: THE FIRST OBLATION."

By A. Forestier.

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Whigs, and the most ardent of the king's admirers, had thus described his manner, but was compelled to say of Anne's first speech to her Privy Council that she pronounced it, "as she did all her other speeches, with great weight and authority, and with a softness of voice and sweetness in the pronunciation which added much life to all she spoke."

So Queen Anne began well. "Good Queen Anne"—though the phrase may first have designated Anne of Bohemia, wife of Richard II.

"DEFOE IN THE PILLORY, 1703." BY KYRE CROWE, A.R.A.

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—might well be her designation, as indeed it often has been. The Church certainly thought her good. The first-fruits of all benefices, once paid to the Pope, but annexed to the Crown under Henry VIII., and exacted, according to the figures in that king's books, with the tenths demanded annually, were surrendered by her for the benefit of poor livings, and placed under a corporation called to this day Queen Anne's Bounty. Fitly does her statue stand at the foot of the steps westwards of St. Paul's Cathedral, in attitude of welcome to those who come to worship in the greatest English cathedral.

But Queen Anne's churchmanship does not fill the public records as do the victories of her reign. In the long war with France, undertaken to prevent the great Spanish inheritance being placed entirely under the power of Louis XIV., the death of William III. changed defeat into victory. John Churchill proved to be the greatest general England had ever known. With Anne's accession the war, foreseen by William, and really a continuation of his own unsuccessful efforts to bridle the French King, broke out. England, the Emperor, and the United Provinces, declared against France. In 1702, Marlborough captured a long string of border fortresses on the Meuse, crushed Louis's ally, the Elector of Cologne, and held the approaches to the Lower Rhine. England was joined in alliance by Savoy and Portugal. The Methuen Treaty of 1703 is famous as an epoch in the traditional friendship between England and Portugal, and it had the

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"BLENHEIM, 1704: STORMING THE VILLAGE, THE KEY OF THE FRENCH POSITION, BY THE DISMOUNTED 2ND NORTH BRITISH DRAGOONS (SCOTS GREYS)." BY R. CATON WOODVILLE.

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subsidiary interest of introducing Englishmen to port wine, a taste which became characteristic of the nation for something like two centuries.

Marlborough, hampered by the political control of his allies, the Dutch, achieved no great things in 1703; but in 1704 he made a magnificent march from the Lower Meuse to the Danube, to protect Vienna from the advancing army of the French under Marshal Tallard. Having beaten the Bavarian allies of France, and united with Prince Eugene of Savoy, the great Austrian general—himself trained in France—Marlborough gave battle on August 13, 1704, at Höchstadt or Blindheim, subsequently known in England as Blenheim, to the combined forces of the French and Bavarians, and utterly defeated them. It was indeed "a glorious victory," the greatest England could remember, and when the conqueror returned to England with a marshal of France among his captives, the enthusiasm of the nation showed itself at fever-point. Marlborough was made a prince of the Holy Roman Empire. At home he received the royal property at Woodstock, and a magnificent palace was built for him by Sir John Vanbrugh, and called Blenheim. It was enriched with tapestry and pictures recording his triumphs.

Blenheim was only the first, and perhaps not the greatest, of a magnificent series of victories. If 1705 was not wholly successful, in 1706 Marlborough won the battle of Ramillies, near Namur, and drove the enemy back on Brussels. Soon almost the whole of the Netherlands was at his feet. Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, Ostend, were surrendered: only Namur and Mons held out. In Spain, English forces under the brilliant Earl of Peterborough captured Barcelona, and seemed to have won the country for the Archduke Charles. In the next year, 1707, the success was reversed, and the Duke of Berwick, son of James II. and nephew of Marlborough, defeated the English in Spain and restored the fortunes of Philip V., the French candidate for the throne. Not till

GIBRALTAR TAKEN BY THE PRINCE OF HESSE-DARMSTADT, 1704. LATER IN THE SAME YEAR IT WAS TAKEN BY THE ENGLISH UNDER ADMIRAL ROOKE.

From an old Dutch print.

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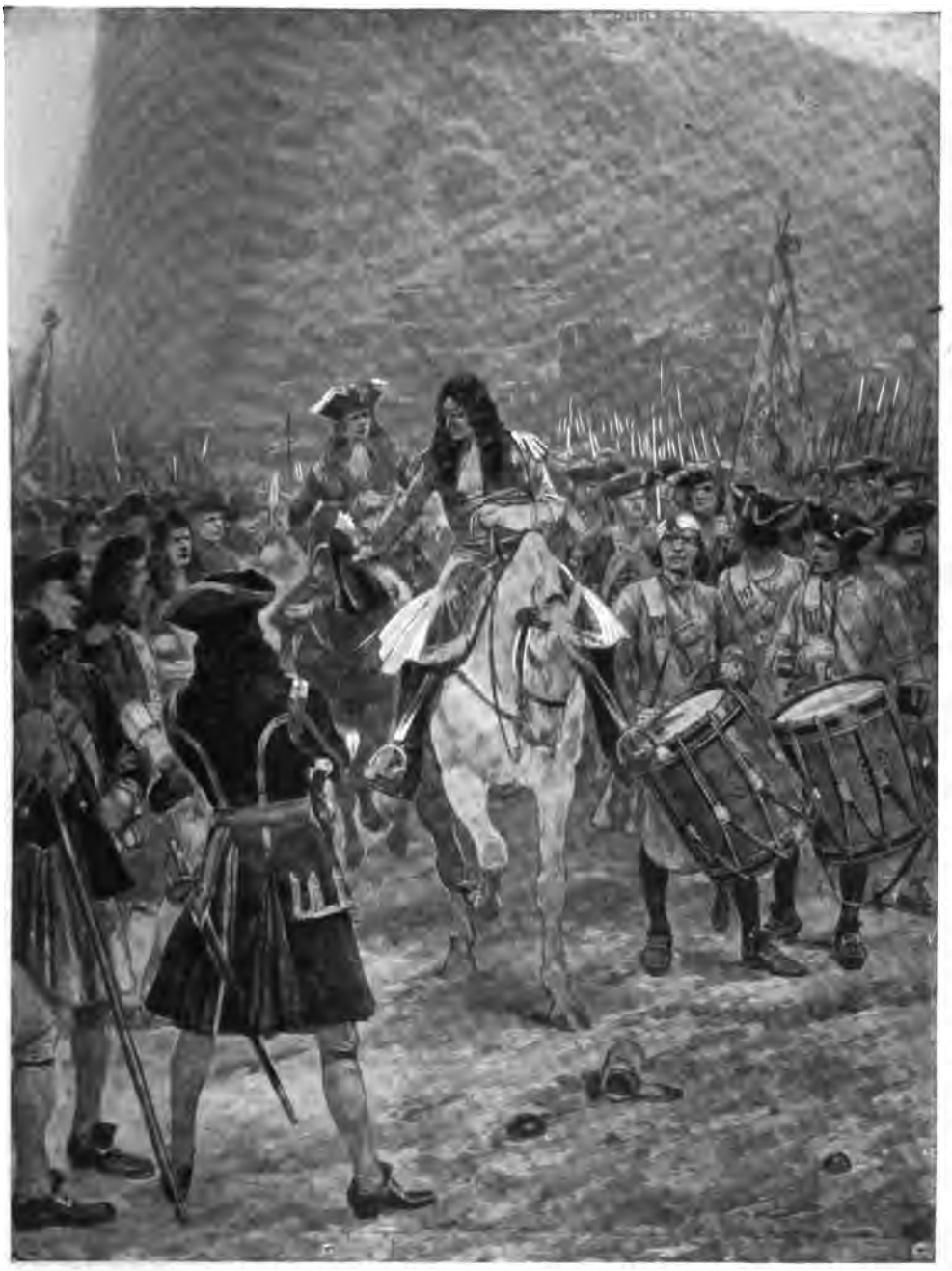

"THE MARQUIS DE SALINES LEAVING GIBRALTAR WITH THE SPANISH TROOPS AFTER ITS CAPTURE BY THE ENGLISH, 1704." BY R. CATON WOODVILLE.

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1708 did Marlborough again achieve a victory in the Netherlands. On July 11, by the battle of Oudenarde, he became master of the Netherlands, and when Lille fell, in spite of the strength of Vauban's great fortifications—which you may trace among the pleasant, shady walks to-day—France was open to the invader. Then General Stanhope captured Minorca: Port Mahon, when he became a peer, gave a title to his eldest son. France was humbled and ready to make peace, but the Allies insisted on Philip being driven from Spain, which was indeed more than could be expected of his great-grandfather. The war was prosecuted with fury. The battle of Malplaquet, September 11, 1709, was the most bloody of all Marlborough's victories. Mons fell, and France seemed open to the invader. Only in Spain was England defeated, when Stanhope was compelled to surrender at Brihuega, and only Catalonia held out for the Austrian

JOHN CHURCHILL, FIRST DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH. BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

From the original in the National Portrait Gallery.

Charles. These later stages of the war had been carried on beyond all reasonable demands of England. It was clear that Philip must remain King of Spain, but in every other respect Louis was defeated, and the supremacy of France in Europe was ended. This was the great achievement of Marlborough, who alone challenges with Wellington the title of the greatest of all English soldiers. A solitary man, who had no passions except a desire for money and a lifelong devotion to his beautiful and imperious wife, Marlborough was the idol of his soldiers, whose welfare he cared for and whose comradeship he appreciated. But he seemed to stand

SARAH JENNINGS, FIRST DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH. BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

From the original in the collection of Earl Spencer.

aloof from the ordinary thoughts and quarrels of men, even when his ambition and its gratification made him the object of envy and jealousy and party spirit at home. His lofty calm and relentless determination in war gave fitness to Addison's famous comparison of him to the Destroying Angel, who,

> Pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
> Rides o'er the whirlwind and directs the storm.

But, like so many great wars, these long campaigns left little permanent result. The possession of Gibraltar, captured by Admiral Rooke in 1704, is the most conspicuous.

Meanwhile, in England, the Whigs had been in power, gradually ousting all the Tories from the ministry. Harley, a Tory, and patron of art and letters, was turned out in 1708. Somers, the great Whig lawyer, who had so far neglected his duty as to affix the Great Seal of England to blank paper for William III., Robert Walpole, later on the greatest of Whig ministers,

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"RAMILLIES, 1706: MARLBOROUGH BRINGING THE CAVALRY INTO ACTION AT THE END OF THE BATTLE."
By R. Caton Woodville.

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and Godolphin, strenuously supported Marlborough at home. They had a brilliant literary following, Addison and Steele among them; but the Tories soon secured the abler critics, such as Prior, Atterbury, scholar, wit, and preacher, and Jonathan Swift, the friend of Harley and of the brilliant Henry St. John, one of the greatest of all Irish writers in the English tongue. The literary warfare culminated in the issue of Swift's "Conduct of the Allies," perhaps the most effective political pamphlet ever written, which showed conclusively that England was pursuing the war solely for the benefit of foreign nations, who left the hardest work to the British troops, took British money, and secured the profits of the victories themselves. England was heartily sick of the war, and when an ecclesiastical grievance was added to the political dissatisfaction, the Whigs were soon thrown from power. Dr. Sacheverell, a vehement Tory, attacked the principles of the Revolution of 1688 in sermons at Derby and in London. The House of Commons, which had inadvertently thanked him for his sermons, had him impeached. He was ordered to be suspended from preaching for three years, and his sermon to be burnt by the hangman. His trial had afforded a splendid opportunity for the enunciation of Whig principles; but the mob were all in his favour, and surrounded the queen's coach, when she went to attend it, with cries of "God bless Your Majesty! We hope Your Majesty is for Dr. Sacheverell." The sentence was merely a fiasco, and Dr. Sacheverell, by no means deservedly, became a popular hero. The change of feeling was shown in the general election of 1710, which returned a large Tory majority.

ROBERT HARLEY, EARL OF OXFORD.
BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER.
From the portrait at the British Museum.

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.
BY RIGAUD.
From the original in the National Portrait Gallery.

The election of 1710 marks the triumph of the party system in England. A complete Tory ministry was appointed, which represented the majority of the House of Commons. Robert Harley was made Lord High Treasurer and raised to the peerage as Earl of Oxford. The descendant of a noted Parliamentarian, and of Nonconformist upbringing, he became a thorough Tory and a marked, though perhaps not very sincere, Churchman. Beside him was a speaker and statesman much more brilliant, Henry St. John, who was made Viscount Bolingbroke in 1712. Swift's journal, written for Stella, the Esther Johnson whom he devotedly loved and perhaps secretly married, gives a vivid record of the party intrigues, the "ups and downs" of public life at the time. The writer was most intimate with the chief Tory statesmen, and was one of their most acute advisers; but his wit was a little too broad for the scrupulous taste of Queen Anne. The "Tale of a Tub," a vivacious defence of

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"MALPLAQUET, 1709: MARLBOROUGH DRIVING THE GARDE DU CORPS OFF THE FIELD." BY R. CATON WOODVILLE.

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Anglicanism as the *via media* between Popery and Dissent, was more mirth-provoking than decorous; and he never received the bishopric which he expected, but had to be content with the deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin, which seemed to the brilliant companion of the ablest statesmen of the day to be something like banishment. Under the skilful party leadership of Bolingbroke, the Tories for some time carried all before them. He believed, as he showed very effectively in later years in his "Letters on History," that the foreign policy of the Revolution era was a mistake. He thought that France was the natural ally, not the enemy, of England, and

writer's play, and publicly complimented the chief actor on "defending the cause of liberty so well against a perpetual dictator." It was the last moment of Marlborough's power. Already the long-suffering affection of the queen had begun to yield to the arrogance of the overbearing "Mrs Freeman," and Abigail Hill, a kinswoman of Harley's, had begun to supplant the duchess. Anne soon began to prefer the gentleness of the younger lady, and interested herself in her love affairs, conniving at her secret marriage with Mr. Masham, one of the royal pages. When she discovered this, Duchess Sarah thought to recover her influence by violence, and the

QUEEN ANNE'S PROCESSION PASSING ALONG THE STRAND TOWARDS ST. PAUL'S, FOR THE THANKSGIVING SERVICE TO COMMEMORATE THE PEACE OF UTRECHT, 1713.

From an old print.

he believed that a treaty of commercial reciprocity would bind the two countries together in a firm friendship. Thus he was prepared to carry out the wish of the weary nation by bringing the long war to an end. Addison's tragedy of "Cato," which was supposed to be written in the interest of Whig principles, had a reception which showed that moral sentiments were popular, but political inferences might be drawn from it contrary to the writer's intention. Marlborough had presumed on his wife's favour to ask to be made captain-general for life. Taking advantage of the popular feeling against this arrogant demand, Bolingbroke attended the performance of the great Whig

queen naturally withdrew from her more and more. At last vehement letters and angry expostulations led to a final interview at Kensington Palace in April, 1710, when the duchess demanded to clear herself from all charges, and exclaimed against those who must have calumniated her. All Anne would answer was: "You desired no answer, and you shall have none." The disgrace of the duchess was followed by the dismissal of her husband. He was charged with peculation, and deprived of his offices, "in order that the matter might undergo an impartial investigation." So he disappeared into the background. He never recovered Court favour, and died in neglect in the reign of George I.,

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practically an imbecile. His dismissal was followed by the peace for which all but violent Whigs were longing. By the Treaty of Utrecht, March 31, 1713, Philip V. was recognised as King of Spain and the Indies. The Catalans were left to their fate. The Emperor received compensation in Italy and the Netherlands, Savoy in Sicily. France recognised "the Protestant succession" in England, and ceded Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Hudson's Bay, thus founding the supremacy of England in North America; and Spain surrendered Gibraltar and Minorca.

"THE DEATH OF ANNE, 1714." BY PETER SCHENK.

It was as much as England had any right to expect, and no peace which gave England more could have been durable. But the Whig House of Lords only passed approval of it when twelve Tory peers had been created. "Do you vote singly or by your foreman?" asked the Duke of Wharton, when they took the oath and their seats.

The Peace of Utrecht secured the succession of the House of Hanover, the issue of Sophia, the sister of the gallant Prince Rupert of the Civil War. But it was by no means certain at first that it would do so. When George, the Electoral Prince, desired to come to England and take his seat in the House of Lords as Earl of Cambridge, Anne was furiously angry, and some at least of the Tory ministry believed that she could be induced to favour the succession of her brother James, who was, of course, but for Act of Parliament, the legitimate sovereign. The last years of the queen's reign were spent in perpetual intrigue. The ministry first did its best to favour the Church. It passed the Occasional Conformity Act in 1711, to prevent the scandal of Dissenters taking the Holy Communion once to satisfy the Test Act, and qualify themselves for office by using the most sacred ordinance of religion as "picklock to a place." In 1714 the Schism Act forbade any Dissenter to keep a school, but the queen's death prevented its operation.

To the end the Tories seemed to hold the reins. In 1713 the elections again gave them a great majority. All might have been well for them but for a quarrel between Oxford and Bolingbroke, and the former, who had treated the queen with great rudeness, was dismissed. But this last act of independence was too exciting for the

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queen's frail health. On July 27, 1714, after a scene of recrimination, Harley was deprived of the White Staff. On July 30 the queen had a stroke of apoplexy. She lingered for two days, and died on August 1. In those two days the whole future history of England was decided. Bolingbroke, it is probable, and Atterbury, it is certain, were prepared to proclaim James III. But the Whig Dukes of Argyll and Somerset appeared in the Council and supported the Duke of Shrewsbury, who was determined to foil the Jacobite plot. They went to the bedside of Anne, and she gave the White Staff to Shrewsbury. Instantly the three dukes took every precaution, and soldiers scoured London when the queen passed away. Bolingbroke summed up the history of the last days bitterly: "In six weeks more we should have put things in such a condition that there would have been nothing to fear. But Oxford was removed on Tuesday: the queen died on Sunday. What a world is this, and how does fortune banter us!"

The literature of Anne's reign includes the work of Addison, Swift, Pope, Prior, Gay, and Defoe. The last-named is represented in the picture here reproduced not as the author of "Robinson Crusoe," but as the political writer whose pamphlet, "The Shortest Way with Dissenters," brought him to the pillory for libel. The picture shows the strange scene in which his friends decorated the pillory with flowers, drank his health, and defended him from insult.

JOSEPH ADDISON. BY MICHAEL DAHL.

From the original in the National Portrait Gallery

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THE HAND INVISIBLE.

By FRED M. WHITE,

Author of "The Crimson Blind," "The Law of the Land," etc.

LEETWOOD stumbled across the gangway of the *Sheffield* and staggered into the arms of a purser. Just for a moment he was on the point of collapse. By the time he had caught his breath again, and a little colour was beginning to creep into his cheek, the boat was slowly beginning to make its way out of the dock. It was yet very dark and still, for the dawn was a full hour off, and the decks were deserted so far as every passenger was concerned. The purser grinned good-naturedly as he steadied Fleetwood on his shaking legs.

"That's a pretty near shave, sir," he said. "Did you manage to get your baggage on board?"

"I have no baggage," Fleetwood explained. "I have practically nothing besides my kit-bag, and someone on the quay kindly threw that after me. I hadn't even time to get a ticket. An hour ago I had not the least intention of leaving England to-day."

The purser ceased to smile. Fleetwood had spoken candidly enough, he had a frank, open way of looking the world in the face, but these little things do not always spell honesty, and the purser had seen enough of men and things not to take everything absolutely for granted.

"I think you had better see the captain, sir," he said.

"That's precisely what I want," Fleetwood replied.

Half an hour later he found himself closeted in the cabin of the *Sheffield* with the captain. And Captain Butcher made no secret of the fact that he did not like it at all.

"You must see for yourself that it is very unusual," he said. "Of course, there's no help for it now. But if you had come to me half an hour before, I might——"

"But, my dear sir," Fleetwood expostulated, "is it an unusual thing for a business man to find himself compelled to catch a boat at a moment's notice? As I explained to your purser, I didn't know an hour ago whether I should be leaving England to-day. It's a matter of life and death. You've got me here for a fortnight—I can't run away—and you can keep as close an eye upon me as you like; and, as far as my passage is concerned, I can pay that ten times over. How does that strike you?"

Fleetwood took a sheaf of notes from his pocket-book and laid them on the table. Butcher's face relaxed a little.

"Oh, well, we must make the best of it," he said. "I'm glad you recognised my position in the matter. And now you'll be wanting a cabin. By the way, you haven't told me if you intend to go the whole way with us."

Fleetwood's face grew a little grim and hard.

"That I cannot say," he said. "Possibly my business may be finished by the time we get to Madeira. I suppose in your time, captain, you have seen many a drama played out with this ship for a background? And, unless I'm greatly mistaken, you're going to watch one now. But that is entirely between you and me. And now may I ask to be shown to my cabin?"

A day or two passed pleasantly enough, and gradually the *Sheffield's* passengers began to shake down together. She was not a great boat, and the saloon boasted no more than forty all told. For the most part, they were Colonials, and not at all difficult from a social point of view. There was a frankness and directness about Fleetwood that won for him a certain degree of popularity. He had travelled widely—indeed, his profession of mining engineer had enabled him to come in touch with many countries in the world—he was a good talker and bridge player, so that he was speedily on the best of terms with everybody. Captain Butcher had long since forgotten his suspicions, so that Fleetwood's position was quite a pleasant one.

There was only one passenger who appeared to hold aloof from the rest. He was a dark, rather taciturn man, who had given the

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name of Cree. For the rest, he was supposed to be a merchant with interests somewhere in Rhodesia. There was something attractive and yet repellant about the man, and on more than one occasion Fleetwood made an attempt to draw him out. But, according to his own account, Cree's time was too occupied to enable him to join in the festivities of the ship. He spent most of the day in his cabin, and the only time he showed himself was after dinner in the smoking-room, when the other male passengers were more or less occupied with their bridge.

On the fifth night of the voyage the bridge play was over earlier than usual. Fleetwood rose from the table with two companions, and made his way over to the remote corner of the smoking-room where Cree was pulling at his pipe in moody silence. He would have escaped if he could, only just at the moment that the bridge was finished he had ordered another whisky and soda, and one of the late players had insisted upon Cree joining them, so that there was no help for it. It was not the first drink by a good many that Cree had had since dinner, and the fact had not escaped Fleetwood's attention.

Just for a moment or two the talk was general, then it veered gradually round to the occult as understood by travellers who had studied the subject in the East. Fleetwood spoke freely and well, for he knew Tibet, and the ways of the Mahatma were familiar to him. His hearers followed him with interest, and one of them, a tea-planter named Stephenson, had a strange story, too, to tell. It was an interesting conversation, and not the less so because Cree sat there nursing his long peg glass with a shaky hand and openly sneering at Stephenson's yarn.

"Do you honestly believe all that nonsense?" he asked.

"Oh, you call it nonsense, do you?" Fleetwood said quietly. "I could tell you a story which you'd have to believe. I suppose your opinion is formed by what you read in the newspapers. They are not all to be laughed at, you know, and I'd like to have a sporting bet with you, Mr. Cree. I'll bet you a five-pound note that I can give you a demonstration of occultism that will keep you here till I've finished. All I stipulate is that you should listen for a quarter of an hour, and, if at the end of that time you like to leave us, then the fiver is yours. Now, come, is it a bet or not?"

An ugly sneer crossed Cree's face.

"I'll take you four times the amount," he said. "Now, what's it to be—hypnotism or blindfold thought-reading, or that crystal-gazing humbug? I've seen them all myself in different parts of the world, and, if I had my way, I'd clap all those rogues in gaol. Here, waiter, bring me another drink, and see that you put in some whisky this time that I can taste."

"Which do you consider the cheapest form of humbug?" Fleetwood asked. "I want to give you every chance."

"Oh, crystal-gazing," Cree muttered contemptuously.

"Then crystal-gazing it shall be. Didn't you say that you had got a crystal somewhere, Stephenson?"

"I believe I have," Stephenson replied. "I've got the whole bag o' tricks in my cabin."

Stephenson returned to the smoking-room a few minutes later with the globe of glass in his hand. Fleetwood turned it round thoughtfully, holding the sphere so that the rays of the electric light fell on it. Then he placed it on the table and gazed long and earnestly at it, until he seemed utterly lost to all surroundings. Cree would have uttered some jibe had not Stephenson checked him with a warning glance. A moment or two later, and Fleetwood began to speak. His voice sounded distant and hollow, his eyes appeared to have lost their expression altogether.

"What do you see?" Stephenson asked.

"It's all blurred and indistinct at present," Fleetwood said. "Wait, and it will grow clearer presently. Ah, I begin to make it out! Here is a room—a room barely furnished, with no carpet on the floor; there is only a table and a chair or two, and a roll-top desk between the two windows. The room is a large one, the panels of the walls are of oak, and the ceiling is the work of Inigo Jones or one of his pupils. It can be nothing but a London house in a suburb which at one time was fashionable. Now it is surrounded by slums and workmen's tenements, because I can hear the shrill voices of women and the crying of children. Though the room is so barely furnished, the two candelabra on the writing-desk are old silver, and the clock on the mantelpiece is genuine Sèvres. It is just like the scene in 'Les Cloches de Corneville' where Gaspard is discovered counting over his money."

"This is devilish interesting!" one of the audience murmured. "All humbug, though, I suppose, Stephenson—eh?"

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"I've seen too many strange things in the East to disbelieve, Maple," Stephenson whispered. "At any rate, our cynical friend yonder is not altogether indifferent. Look at him."

Maple glanced in Cree's direction. His white, set face was twitching, and his teeth were bare in an unsteady grin. As a waiter hovered near, he indicated his empty glass. All this time Fleetwood was going on in a steady monotone.

"The miser must be somewhere, though I cannot see him yet. His desk is open, and in the light of the candles I can see some bags of money and piles of bank-notes. Ah, he's beginning to come at last! He is a little, dried-up man, with a black velvet skull-cap on his scant and silvery hair. He closes the door behind him and looks about him fearfully as if afraid of being seen. Despite his years and the yellow parchment of his face, his black eyes have all the fire and vivacity of youth. See, he is seated by his desk, turning over his money and counting it again and again. The door opens, and a young girl comes in. She is dressed as if she had just come out of the street; she is clad in shabby garments, and her pretty face is pinched and wan. She looks as if she knew what it was to go without proper food. Directly she comes in, the old man pulls down the lid of his desk and turns towards her with an angry frown upon his face. The girl is pleading for something, for she holds out her hands to the old man, she falls on her knees at his feet. Then very reluctantly and slowly he takes from his pocket a small silver coin, and hands it to the girl with an expression of resignation on his face. But what have we got here? The corner of the ragged blind is on one side, and the pale outline of a face can be seen beyond the grimy pane. It is a white, set face with dark, restless, greedy eyes, and a mouth slightly twisted on the left side."

"So's mine, for that matter," Cree laughed.

No one else spoke—they were all deeply interested in following Fleetwood's strange story. He did not appear to hear the interruption, for he went on steadily.

"The girl vanishes, and a young man takes her place. He is a fine youngster enough, with a bronzed face and blue eyes. But the bronzed face is convulsed in rage now, and the blue eyes are blazing. Just for the moment it looks as if the old man went in peril of his life; then the young man throws himself down in the chair and begins to take his boots off. He leaves his boots by the side of the fireplace, and produces a pair of carpet slippers from a cupboard in the wall. It is plain that the young man lives in the house, for he leaves the room presently, and a door bangs sullenly in a bedroom overhead. The Sèvres clock over the mantelpiece strikes the hour of twelve. It is impossible to tell the time by the face of the clock, because one of the hands is missing."

"Waiter," Cree cried hoarsely, "more drink!"

"The white face disappears from the window. The door of the room opens, and the white face and the uneasy, glittering eyes come in. The old man turns from his desk, and for the first time his eyes are full of fear. He crosses over to lay his hand upon the tattered bell-pull, but the other man bars the way. The old man struggles. For his age, he is marvellously strong and active. but at last he staggers and falls, and a cry for help breaks from his lips. There is an open knife on the mantelpiece—the sort of knife that sailors generally use. The knife has probably been left there by the young man who is upstairs in his bedroom. Oh, it is horrible to watch what follows! The old man lies there in a pool of blood on the bare floor. He is dead. He has been murdered by the man with the white face and the restless eyes."

"Upon my word, it sounds quite real!" Maple whispered. "I say, Mr. Cree, you've lost your bet. It's quite half an hour since the seance began—what?"

But Cree made no reply. He sat there absolutely engrossed in what was going on. At every pause that Fleetwood made, he wriggled with an impatience that was almost painful to witness.

"The knife lies on the floor by the dead man's side. Evidently the murderer is no stranger to the house, because he knows exactly what to do. He takes off his own shoes and picks up the pair of boots belonging to the lad who is asleep upstairs. He dips the soles of the boots in the pool of blood and slips them on his own feet. Then, snatching one of the candles from the stand, he makes a series of red footsteps on the bare boards leading into the hall. He is concocting evidence against the innocent boy upstairs. He crosses to the desk and places everything he can find there in a bag. There are a good many thousands' worth of property—twenty-three thousand seven hundred and fifty, to be correct; a memorandum

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in the old man's handwriting shows that. All grows indistinct for a moment."

"You've lost your bet, Cree," Maple chuckled.

"It is all coming distinct again. And here is another man—a man who gazes with horror at the object on the floor. This man pulls violently at the bell, the young man from above comes down, the room is full of people, and the police are here. They ask questions, they clear the room, they find that knife and those tell-tale footprints. But they do not find a pocket-book and a cake of tobacco manufactured by a firm in Cape Town, which the man who discovered the body picked up, for the simple reason that he has hidden these things in his pocket. Then the young man with the blue eyes goes off in charge of the police, and once more the crystal grows blurred and misty."

No word was uttered as Fleetwood rose and stretched himself. Apparently Cree had forgotten all about his bet, for he sat there white and rigid, his eyes strained and full of a certain awe. But Fleetwood had not finished yet. He bent once more over the crystal, and began to speak again.

"I see many pictures now. I see keen-eyed men bending over the pocket-book and cake of tobacco. In some way I know that they are detectives from Scotland Yard. The man who discovered the dead body must have sent the evidence on to them. I see them comparing those boots with the footprints; I see them examining the grease stains from the candle across the floor. They are asking themselves why a young man who knows the house so well should need a candle. They have found out all about the owner of the pocket-book; they have discovered that he only landed in England four hours before the murder, and they are after him before he can leave the country again. But they are too late—he has already vanished. Still, he is not destined to escape. For the man who discovered the body is after him; and the pursuer has the advantage of having seen a photograph of the murderer, and this advantage is all on one side. It comes to me in some way that the murderer is a ne'er-do-well nephew of the poor old man, who has come home on purpose to rob him.

"And then I see long, black buildings and a forest of shipping, and I see a vessel leaving the docks, and a man gain her decks just in the nick of time. And I see myself at this moment with this crystal in my hand."

A strange, strangled cry came from Cree's lips as he rose unsteadily to his feet. The empty glass fell from his hand and crashed upon the floor. He seemed to be struggling hard for some form of collected speech.

"It's all arrant humbug!" he said hoarsely. "Did anyone ever hear such a farrago of nonsense? How you men supposed to be possessed of common-sense can sit down and listen to it, I don't know. For me, I'm going to bed."

"Oh, that's all very well!" Maple protested. "If it's all nonsense like that, why did you stay so long? You've lost your bet, though you seem to have forgotten it."

"I was thinking of something else," Cree muttered. "I had actually forgotten all about the bet. Still——"

He plunged his hand in his pocket, but Fleetwood shook his head. His face was grim and hard now.

"And if I refuse to take the money?" he asked. "It is morally and legally wrong to bet on a certainty, and it was a certainty from the first that Mr. Cree would stay and hear every word that I had to utter. We will defer the question of the bet till to-morrow morning. Meanwhile I have to wish Mr. Cree good night, and may his dreams be as pleasant as he deserves."

Without another word Cree turned on his heel and left the smoking-room. He was followed a few moments later by Fleetwood, who declined to carry the matter any further just then. He was tired and exhausted with his mental effort, and, if the audience had anything further to say, he would rather it was deferred till the next morning.

Maple and Stephenson followed him quietly and thoughtfully out of the smoking-room.

"There's something devilish queer about this," the former exclaimed. "Made me feel quite creepy. And did you happen to see Cree's face? Never have I seen such abject funk in my life before. The chap was absolutely livid. Now, what do you make of it, Stephenson? If it was humbug——"

But Stephenson declined to be drawn.

"Oh, it's no humbug," he said, "and, incidentally, it's no business of ours. Keep your eyes open and ask no questions, and you'll see things before long. Good night, old chap."

But Fleetwood had not retired to bed. He sat there smoking till far into the night; his electrics were burning, and he seemed to be waiting for something. It came presently towards morning; there was a timid

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tap on the door, and a white, ghastly face looked in. The ghastliness of feature and the glaring, tired eyes were in almost amusing contrast to the gaudy suit of pyjamas that Cree was wearing.

"I can't sit down," he whined. "Fleetwood, you are the devil! I've heard of these things before, and I've never believed them; and yet I cannot doubt the evidence of my senses. What brought those pictures in

"He seemed to be struggling hard for some form of collected speech."

"May I come in?" he stammered.

"I've been waiting for you for hours," Fleetwood said quietly. "Sit down and tell your story in your own way."

But Cree paced up and down the cabin.

the crystal? Why, out of millions of people, was I selected as the victim?"

"Oh, it is a picture from your own life, then?" Fleetwood asked.

"Oh, you know it, you devil," Cree

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screamed, "and yet, as far as I know, you were on this boat before the murder was committed."

"The murder of Stephen Syme, you mean?"

"Why should I deny it? Do you know, till to-night I never discovered that I had left that pocket-book and that packet of tobacco behind me. I could have screamed aloud when you got to that part of the story. If you have tricked me——"

"Keep to the point," Fleetwood said sternly, "and remember that I never asked you to make a confession."

"But the police are after me," Cree whined; "you told me all about it when you were reading the crystal. And you had got it as clear as if you had been there and seen it all yourself. I came back from South Africa on purpose to see the old man and get money out of him. I didn't care much how I obtained it, and nobody knew that I was coming. It was no difficult matter to get into the house. When I saw the old man sitting at his desk, with all that money about him—well, I am a desperate man, and the temptation was too much for me. He was a miserable old miser. I have known his own daughter appeal to him——"

"I know," Fleetwood said quietly. "I am engaged to Mary Syme, and I came back on purpose to marry her. But I am saying a little bit too much. You go on with your story."

"There is no more story to tell," Cree resumed. "The temptation was too much for me. Within ten minutes I was out of the house and on my way to the docks. I had all that money with me, and the comfortable assurance that I should be on the *Sheffield* before anybody knew that I was in London. Oh, I'm not defending myself! It was a blackguardly thing on my part to try and throw the blame on young Matthew Syme. Anyway, I shall know how to meet my punishment when the time comes. You'll find all that money in my cabin, and, as for the rest, it must take care of itself. I can't sleep, Fleetwood—I dare not be alone!"

Cree clasped his hands to his eyes and rushed from the cabin. A moment later there was a cry and a noise overhead, and a hoarse voice yelling that a man was overboard.

* * * * *

"Of course, he was utterly puzzled," Fleetwood told the captain. "He died a firm believer in the dark mysteries of the crystal. You see, I had chapter and verse of the things that happened, a day or two after the *Sheffield* left port, and Cree knew that every item was correct. I was going to see old Syme, and I practically met Cree on the doorstep of the miser's house as he was hurrying off after the murder. I knew him from his photograph, but he did not know me. I heard him ask a boy to get him a cab; I followed and heard the address given. Then I found the evidence of the crime, and ten minutes after I was on Cree's track, only just in time. Sentiment is all very well, but I was anxious to save the money for the family. That is why I played that theatrical game and frightened a confession out of him. If he had landed in South Africa, he would certainly have got rid of the money, probably feeling that there was a chance of being arrested. It sounds cheap, but it was very effectual."

"Not so clever as he thought," Butcher smiled.

"No, or he would have guessed," Fleetwood replied. "And now I shall be obliged if you will tell me what I owe you for all those expensive marconigrams?"

"AND A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."

WHEN in a smile your baby lips are parted,
The sun shines in my heart, life grows less grey;
And, like some careless boy, I'd sing light-hearted
The livelong day.

But when you grieve and, tears' relief disdaining,
With quivering lip you turn your head away,
My heart is sad, as when low clouds are raining
On summer's day.

As thrills the harp beneath the minstrel's fingers,
Your little hands upon my heart-strings play;
And when upon my lips your pure kiss lingers,
Night turns to day!

VACHELL PHILPOT.

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YET ANOTHER "BULL."

GOLFER (checking himself): Er—um—ahem!
CADDIE: If you 'adn't been 'ere, miss, you'd 'ave 'eard some *beautiful* language.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

JONES: Is your wife critical?
BROWN: Frightfully! She is almost as bad as my fifteen-year-old daughter.

A SMALL tradesman once put up the following notice in his shop: "Please don't ask for credit, as a refusal often offends." Finding that this had little effect, and that his credit book was attaining great proportions, he resolved on trying another plan, and immediately fixed up another notice in place of the former one: "The names and addresses of all those who buy goods at this shop, and don't pay for them, can be seen in the credit book on payment of a fee of twopence." The result was miraculous. Not only did the curious pay their twopences by the dozen, but those owing accounts speedily settled them, until the credit book became a thing of the past.

VERY few artists can draw a horse, but almost any kind of a horse can draw an artist.

SMITH: That chap next door is having a terrible argument with his wife.
MRS. SMITH: But I don't hear his voice at all?
SMITH: Why should you—when he hasn't spoken yet?

AGNES: And did he say I looked intellectual?
GLADYS: Oh, no, indeed! I assure you he said nothing disparaging.

AN angler once missed his gold cigarette case, and being very much upset about it, but not being quite certain whether it had been lost or stolen, resolved not to mention the matter to a soul—not even to his wife. Two years had passed by, when, on his happening to meet with a piscatorial acquaintance by the riverside, the man astonished him by remarking: "I say, did you ever find that cigarette case you lost some time ago?" "No," replied the angler to the more astonished inquirer, "but *you* did!"

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TO CHLOE, AFTER A SALE.

Always, my dearest Chloe, I've admired
  Your taste, your elegance, your style of dress;
Others, I know, have painfully aspired
  To emulate its simple loveliness.
Your hats, your boots, your gloves, I grant, are thrilling,
  I've known your hatpins to be simply killing.

You wore a hat of most outrageous size
  Last summer, if my memory is right—
A hat of huge dimensions—but your eyes,
  Beneath two feet of brim, shone forth so bright,
The monstrous thing erected on your head
So charmed us that all followed where you led.

From head to foot you're always very charming,
  Each skirt, each jacket, is a perfect dream.
Though some might think your tailor's bill alarming,
  And unkind critics say the colours scream,
Heed not their envious jeers; your taste in colour
Saves this dull world of ours from being duller.

'Twas only once I feared that you might fail.
  A pair of stockings, was it, that you wore?
Or did I dream you visited a sale
  And bought a dozen pairs, or somewhat more—
Blue, purple, scarlet, yellow, green, and rose,
In ghastly lengths of unexampled hose?

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,"
  The poet sings; and even stockings, too,
Though they can't blush, should be concealed, I ween,
  Save for a dainty inch 'twixt skirt and shoe.
Should we not yesterday have deemed it shocking
To flaunt to-day's exuberance of stocking?

Ernest Hockliffe.

NO MONOPOLY, SURELY!

FARMER BIPSEED (inspecting his artistic lodger's pastoral scene): What—call them cows? Why, I never seen cows like that afore!

ARTIST: Well, I don't suppose you've *all* the cows in the world.

NOT YET.

"You must be frightfully lonely with your husband away so much. Look in and see me."

"Oh, it's not so bad as all that, thank you!"

"AH," says the guest, "how I wish I could sit down to one of those chickens we raised on the farm when I was a boy!"

"Well," says the host, "you never can tell. This may be one of them."

ETHEL: Is my hat on straight?
KITTY: No, one eye shows.

THE Sunday-school had gone for its annual outing to Epsom Downs, to indulge in donkey rides and many other fearful joys of childhood. One little girl, left behind, accounted for her tears by saying they had all gone to Ups and Downs without her.

CLARA (blushing): I've just heard again from Jack.

MAUD: He writes a splendid love-letter, doesn't he?

"EVERYTHING comes to him who waits, I suppose," said the restaurant diner patiently.

"Yes, sir," answered the waiter, "but the gentleman what won't wait gets his first."

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A SUBTERRANEAN SUBTERFUGE

By Jessie Pope.

THE carriage looked full at Farringdon Street, but it was not so. That is to say, it only contained ten travellers, and, as the railway authorities had decreed there was room for six people a side, a pale, auburn-haired young man and his short, dark, sturdy companion, who opened the door at the last moment, felt justified in entering. They sat down opposite to each other, perching in cramped positions on the two small wedge-shaped portions of hard cushion, grudgingly allotted to them by their injured fellow-passengers. Yet it was evident, as in low tones they resumed the thread of their interrupted conversation, that they were absorbed by graver matters than personal discomfort.

"Will he be much marked, do you think?" said the short, dark, sturdy one. The red-haired youth compressed his lips with a short intake of breath.

A BAD SHOT.

SCHOOLMISTRESS: You dirty boy! Why don't you wash your face, and not let it show what you had for breakfast this morning?

SMALL BOY: What was it?

SCHOOLMISTRESS: Eggs.

SMALL BOY: Wrong! Eggs was yesterday.

"I'm afraid so," he said. "He's having a very bad bout of it, poor chap!"

"Do you see him?"

"Yes, continually. He seems to find it a comfort."

"You're not afraid of catching it, then?"

"Oh, I risk that. Besides, I don't catch things easily myself."

He leant back as he spoke, for the man and girl on either side of him had somehow managed to give him more room.

"Well, I saw him two days ago," said his friend, "and, upon my word, I quite thought *I'd* caught it afterwards. I had all the symptoms, but I put that down to nerves, don't you?"

"Yes, probably; besides, they say it is a thing you are not so liable to catch yourself direct, as to transmit to others."

"Yes, so I heard," said the dark young man, also leaning back, "though I suppose, as a matter of fact, he ought to be isolated."

At this point a lady made a faltering appeal to have the other window open, and with her young daughter went and stood against it.

"Oh, we should *hate* to have him isolated," said the red-haired youth, shrugging his shoulders, "and, fortunately, we're not a nervous family."

By this time seven occupants of the carriage had screened themselves as much as possible with open newspapers, while the rest turned their faces to the windows, and were gulping down large breaths of sulphurous tunnel atmosphere.

"The irritation is very severe, I suppose," said the dark, sturdy man, with a frown of apprehensive sympathy on his face.

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"Tremendous. We ought to tie his hands, really, but we haven't the heart to."

"He'd thank you for it afterwards, very likely."

"Perhaps he would," replied the other, relapsing into a careworn abstraction, as the train slowed up for King's Cross, Metropolitan.

Before it had stopped, all the other passengers, including ladies, had alighted at their own risk, apparently to seek other compartments.

The last to get out was an elderly gentleman, who had previously, and without rebuke, lit a large cigar, though it was not a smoking compartment. He walked a few steps towards the exit, then returned to the carriage window, just as the two friends settled themselves luxuriously in opposite corners.

"I am going to inform the guard," he said menacingly, "that you are infecting a public conveyance with the germs of a contagious disease."

"But we're not doing anything of the kind," protested the short, dark, sturdy man, in his quiet, grave way. The elderly gentleman looked fiercely incredulous.

"Then, pray, what is your friend suffering from?" he ejaculated.

"A flea!" replied the red-haired youth, putting his feet up on the opposite seat, and lighting a cigarette as the train moved out of the station.

THE OLDEST CLASSIC.

"SEEMS a waste for them to be takin' it anywhere, don't it, guv'ner, when all that'll arrive, at the rate it's losin' pieces of itself now, is the new coat o' paint they was so reckless over?" And he went into the middle of the road and picked up two nuts, an inch or two of chain, and some curious-looking shreds of rubber.

"Well, p'raps the biscuit boxes the men are settin' on may fetch up all right. 'Ere's a piece o' cord. One o' the wheels was tied on with that, I s'pose." And he put it in his pocket.

I gazed after it, at the bits of chain dangling from its interior, and at the gentle shower of screws and bits of metal covering its wake. The spasmodic efforts of the near back wheel to effect a revolution interested me particularly. Suddenly my eye caught the number-plate on the back.

"Look," I shouted, when I had stopped laughing, "that explains it all!" And I pointed to its simple legend. "11 B.C." he read, and turned away pondering. ***Charles Marriage.***

GIVE AND TAKE.

LADY (to applicant for cook's situation): Why did you leave your last place?
APPLICANT: Surely that's very inquisitive, marm; I didn't ask you what your last cook left you for.

FIRST SOCIETY LEADER: How are the acoustics of the new theatre?

SECOND SOCIETY LEADER: Too good. Some people in the dress circle said they could hear every word spoken in our box.

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"A LITTLE BRITON." BY MRS. SEYMOUR LUCAS.

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"MASTER BABY." BY SIR WILLIAM QUILLER ORCHARDSON, R.A.

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THE MODERN CHILD IN ART.

BY AUSTIN CHESTER.

WHAT constitutes the true artist is, we know, not the process, slow or quick, facile or difficult, by which his result has been obtained, but the absolute success of that result. Especially are we made conscious of this truth when we are faced by several artists' different treatments of the same theme.

In choosing childhood as subject, the painters of the pictures that we reproduce show themselves to partake in theme alone of common character, for each painter reaches the subject from a different starting-point and by an unconnected road. Although each brings to his work loyalty of observation, "pictorial imagination, and a magic hand," some show the happy facility of the rough sketch, and some the deeply-pondered evocation, the full splendour of highly-elaborated finish.

If the writer finds it hard, as we know he does, in the employment of the literary art, to discover that one word of expression which already exists in language to define his subject, hard to find that "one adjective to qualify, that one verb which is to animate it," and if he afflicts his soul over the evasion of memory of some concrete term, how much harder it must be for the painter to discover that colour and tone he requires; for to these he has as guide but the inward sense, and he has actually on his palette to make the equivalent of the *mot juste* before he can apply it to his canvas.

> Ah, then, if mine had been the painter's hand
> To express what then I saw, and add the gleam
> The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the poet's dream,

wrote Wordsworth, longing to employ some other vehicle than words, and failing to realise that he was to live by their means as a painter of a picture of childhood which not even our greatest masters in paint have surpassed, and that his verse—

> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter nakedness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home,

was to be held as absolutely clairvoyant of that spirituality which is the peculiar

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characteristic of the child alone. That spirituality makes it, in its earliest years, the nurseling of immortality, since

> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar.

Wordsworth knew, "thanks to the human heart by which we live, thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears," and thanks, too, to the artist's intuition, the abstract existence of the child, its detachment from actual thought, and its high indifference to the affairs of a prosaic world, and by means of his genius he crystallised his knowledge in his work.

"FOR THESE AND ALL THY MERCIES." BY FRED ELWELL.
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In paint, only one picture of a child—that in the painting known as the Sistine Madonna, by Raphael—can be said to hold that look of fearful innocence which Wordsworth describes. It alone betrays that Heaven indeed "lies about us in our infancy," and that then the eyes are actually open to a vision to which later they become blind, and that, to use the language of paradox, the mystery of life is deepest at its actual shallows.

There is an exaltation and a glory about the expression of the Holy Child which places this picture in the highest ranks of the painter's masterpieces. The particular child here represented was, we know, possessed of a sacred wisdom denied to the ordinary child, but even the ordinary child shares the half-spiritual, half-human, and wholly contemplative gaze which Raphael presents to us.

If Pater is right—that the aim of art is not to teach lessons, or even to stimulate us to noble ends, but to withdraw the thoughts for a little while from the mere machinery of life—then the age of childhood is a peculiarly suitable subject for the painter's brush, for it is

> A centre, come from whereso'er you will,
> A whole without dependence or effect,
> Made for itself, and happy in itself,
> Perfect contentment, unity entire.

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The first five years of childhood Sterne declares to be passed "with a bib under the chin," four more to be employed in of Greek and Latin, land the child in man's estate; and then the intellect and not the soul shines through his eyes. What wonder that,

"BED-TIME." BY LEONARD CAMPBELL TAYLOR.

From the original purchased by the Italian Government for the National Gallery at Rome.

"travelling from Christ Cross Row to Malachi," then one and a half in the child's "learning to write its name," whilst the seven following, spent in mastering the difficulties during the first stages of its journey through life, the mother, who sees the child "moving about in worlds not realised," imagining that its soul "still has sight of that immortal

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sea which brought it hither," seeks to leaven the infiltration of the prosaic to which it is subject with romance, and that she sings to the baby those silly, tender knee-songs which are older than their recorded history, for the language of the nursery belongs to the primitive culture of the world.

Of illustrations of this period passed by the child with a bib under the chin, "By the Light of the Fire," by Frank Bramley, is a charming example. We get here, by means of his art, a picture of mother-worship and of that yet more tolerant adoration by many to be found on the Cornish coast. "Bed-time," by Mr. L. Campbell Taylor, is a picture of the same hour, and holds the same intimate quality as does that of Mr. Frank Bramley. The young mother clasps the child to her breast with the same loving grip, and the grandmother has here become the nurse, but the child is, in each of these pictures, the object of the women's worship. Subdued in tone, tender in treatment, decorative in design, "Bed-time" attains to a happy conjunction of sentiment with style. The picture, lately

"A MEAN ADVANTAGE." BY F. MAZOTTA.

From the original in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, reproduced from a photograph by Mansell & Co., by permission of the Corporation of Liverpool.

the grandmother, who, in looking upon her child's child, sees long-dead days recur and her youth renew itself. Such a scene as the one Mr. Bramley has painted belongs to all women's experiences. "By the Light of the Fire" is in subject both wistful and human; it lends itself most kindly as vehicle to Mr. Bramley's art, which is ever one of contracted luminous light and tender shadow, imbued with imaginative quality. This picture was probably painted when Mr. Bramley made one of the Newlyn colony, for the interior of the cottage which forms the background to the figures is similar to

purchased by the Italian Government, hangs in the National Gallery at Rome. Sir William Quiller Orchardson's "Master Baby" has actually the bib under the chin. It is one of the really great pictures executed by this artist of immense capacity, for Orchardson was one of the men who, at the end of the last century, helped to replace English art in a position of honourable standing. "Master Baby," with its impeccable draughtsmanship, its talent and accomplishment, stands for a model to many able painters. So unobtrusive is its technique that we look through this to the scene of life presented.

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"FOES OR FRIENDS?" BY PHIL R. MORRIS, A.R.A.

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It is not the painting of the laughing, crowing child we contemplate, but the semblance of movement in the restless limbs; it is not any special beauty in the mother of nervous, anxious temperament, who holds

We can, by means of pictures, follow the child through pretty well every hour of its day. It is shown us at breakfast in Miss Lovering's picture "Porridge"; we see it being rocked to sleep in the forenoon in Mrs.

"CARNATION, LILY, LILY, ROSE." BY JOHN SARGENT.

From the original in the Chantrey Collection at the National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, S.W., reproduced from the large plate published by the Autotype Company, New Oxford Street, W.C.

the attractive fan above her first-born, which we note, but the absolute naturalness of the attitude, so that the whole picture stands to us less as a picture than as a scene of actual life.

Stanhope Forbes's "June at the Farm"; we see it at its play in "Bubbles," by Miss Flora Reid; and we see it in sickness in "The Vigil," by R. Gemmell-Hutchison; we see it in its bath in Mr. Fred Elwell's "Motherhood."

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"FOLLOW MY LEADER!" BY FRED MORGAN.

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"MOTHERHOOD." BY FRED ELWELL.

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and this is, perhaps, its most attractive hour. "Dawn," by Mr. Ralph Peacock, is of this period of the child's life; so, too, is Mr. Lee Hankey's "Merry Things Are Now at Rest"; and had we space to enumerate them, we could quote the titles of a thousand pictures which have used infant life as their theme.

The time passed in travelling from "Christ Cross Row to Malachi"—from five years old to nine—is, perhaps, to the child, the most enjoyable period of his life, as it is the most attractive to the painter. A willing student of his elders, a copyist of their peculiarities, an unconscious mimic, he jests at life,

> Turning to mirth
> All things of earth
> As only boyhood can.

His day is one of "endless imitation."

> See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
> Some fragment from his dream of human life,
> Shaped by himself with newly-learned art;
> A wedding or a festival,
> A mourning or a funeral;
> And this hath now his heart,
> And unto this he frames his song.

During this period of the child's life we see him, a willing protestant of noise, in "A Pageant of Childhood," by T. C. Gotch; engaged in the mystery of prayer in the picture by Miss Ida Lovering called "Evening Prayer," in which the kneeling white-robed figures are the playground of contention for day and firelight; saying grace in "For These and All Thy Mercies," by Fred Elwell. We see the child as breadwinner in the picture "On the Mountain-side, Engelberg," by Jane Dealy; in "The Little Match-Girl," by N. Sanson; and in "Strangers in a Strange Land," a picture of little itinerant musicians, by Albert Starling, which is in Liverpool's fine collection. We see the boy, through the eyes of Erskine Nicol, laying out his pence in "What Shall I Buy?" We see him not too honest in Mazotta's fine picture—also in the Liverpool Gallery—entitled "A Mean Advantage," where he helps himself from a pot steaming above a charcoal brazier during a moment of somnolence on his grandmother's part.

"THE WHITE FEATHER." BY CRESWELL H. DESMOND.

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But mostly at this age we see the child at play. Fred Morgan has given us many such pictures. "Oranges and Lemons," "Hide-and-Seek," "Follow My Leader!" and "Steady!" are a few of this popular painter's subjects. "The New

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Doll," by W. R. Symonds, marks the difference between the play of the well-to-do and the poor child—the one nurses an elaborately-dressed doll for enjoyment, the other carries a poorly-dressed brother from necessity.

We find most happy illustrations of these days in several of Mrs. Seymour Lucas's pictures. "Small and of No Reputation" shows us a happy little rascal of the slums, whilst "The Distaff" and "Our Grandmothers" and "The First Chapter" take us into a more sophisticated sphere of life. In "The First Chapter" we see a mother in the early years of the Restoration—when the dress which marked the period of the Protectorate still kept its hold on the ephemeral fashion of women's attire—reading to her children, and we wonder what book she found of that time suitable to their young ears. Could we read the name written on the vellum cover, we should probably find it to be Perrault's "Contes du temps passé," for "Puss in Boots" owes its origin to that writer. The taste of children was then not catered for with any of the prodigality it has been during the last century. Aural fireside stories, old wives' tales, were told to them, alphabet rhymes and nursery songs, and riddle rhymes and Nature songs they heard; but the Brothers Grimm did not open out their printed fund of wonder till the beginning of the nineteenth century, and even "The Arabian Nights" was not translated into English until the beginning of the eighteenth. The child of those days, who probably perambulated the passages of the big house which was its home, ringing a soundless bell, and importuning phantom figures to purchase invisible muffins, was ignorant, totally ignorant, of the tragedy that befell little Johnny Head-in-Air, and of how Augustus, once a chubby lad with bright, rosy cheeks, which everybody saw with joy,

> The bright and healthy, hearty boy,

dwindled to a thread-paper through refusing his daily soup. He was ignorant, too, of those tales of "Uncle Remus" which detail the exploits of "Brer Rabbit," and it is sad to think that he knew nothing of the marvellous adventures which befell Alice in Wonderland. We may suppose him to have known the story of "Jack the Giant-Killer,"

"THE SUNSHINE OF LIFE." BY FRED MORGAN.

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"JUST IN TIME!" BY ARTHUR J. ELSLEY.

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for, according to Walter Scott, Jack, in company of Tom Thumb and Hengist and Horsa, reached our shores in A.D. 455. Even to-day, however, not many of the children who are cognisant of all the details of the adventurous career of that hero know that Jack is held to have been the son of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere, or that, under the alias of Child Roland, carrying the good sword "Excalibur," his chief exploit was the rescue of his sister, Burd Helen, from the castle of the Ogre who ruled Elf Land. Swinging "Excalibur," so the story runs, he killed all who sought to impede him on his way to her rescue, and the heads of horseherds, cowherds, swineherds, and henwives, fell beneath the magic of his blade. It did its work on the Elf King-Ogre, who, saying, "Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of Christian man!" burst upon Jack, or Roland—the Roland of "King Lear"—as he was watching his sister, Burd Helen, "kumbing her yellow hair with a silver kumb." After which feat he conducted her back to "Merry Carlisle."

"I would not," wrote Walter Scott, "give one tear shed over similar exploits for all the benefits to be derived from a hundred histories of Jemmy Goodchild"; and when we place the stories for children which were popular in Scott's time, stories many of them told in verse such as—

> Little Ann and her mother were walking one day
> Through London's wide city so fair,
> And business obliged them to go by the way
> That led them through Cavendish Square

—stories each holding its moral, and showing its hero or heroine a selfish, sycophantic prig—we find ourselves in perfect agreement with the great romance writer.

Of the years that are passed by the child "in learning to write his name"—that is, by

> . . . . the whining school-boy, with his satchel
> And shining morning face, creeping like snail
> Unwillingly to school

"POT LUCK." BY CRESWELL H. DESMOND.
Reproduced by permission of the Artist.

—say, of the child from nine to eleven and a half years of age—we have many illustrations, but chiefly at his play. Such pictures as "Ring o' Roses," by Fred Morgan, and "Oranges and Lemons," by the same artist, give us a view of games that, with the exception of "The Mulberry Bush," are without rival in childhood's affection.

At the gates of Malachi, that undiscoverable bourne, stand the children in "Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose." This picture, which, so far, must be taken as the highest point of Mr. Sargent's imaginative art, was

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painted twenty-five years ago. Here we get the poetic and the technical qualities in equipoise. Brilliantly individual, the ambition and the attainment the canvas revealed caused Mr. Sargent to be hailed by connoisseurs as a painter of extraordinary talent and even more extraordinary promise. For some years Mr. Sargent's popularity in portraiture threatened extinction to the exquisite romanticism in which he won this, his early success; and although a rare sincerity of purpose, of vigour, and an insight into the character of his sitters mark all his portraits, it is one of the ensigns of his ambition that during the last few years, and notwithstanding an increasing vogue in portraiture, he has returned, greedy of fresh experience, into romantic paths.

Of the seven years passed at "Greek and Latin," we have some excellent pictures, from "The Bathers," by Fred Walker, one of the finest works that artist ever executed, to the truthful types of Mr. Fred Elwell, Mr. Creswell Desmond, and Mr. H. S. Tuke. At this age "shades of the prison-house" have, we know, already begun "to close upon the growing boy," but

> The youth who daily farther from the east
> Must travel, still is Nature's priest,
> And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended.

All such pictures remind us that children have a real character and an essential being of themselves, that they are amiable or unamiable *per se*, and that, as childless Charles Lamb wrote: "A child's nature is too serious a thing to admit of its being regarded as a mere appendage to another being, and to be loved or hated accordingly; they stand with me upon their own stock, as much as men and women do." And Charles Lamb fully realises that "earth has not anything to show more fair" than

> A simple child that lightly draws its breath
> And feels its life in every limb.

And there is a curious sense of self-possession in the child's mind in even the first stages of its mental journey towards that house of thought in which ultimately, when no longer a child, it is to live as citizen.

"THE CHILDREN'S HOUR." BY A. CHEVALLIER TAYLER.
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THE INTOXICATING DRAUGHT.

By A. HAMILTON GIBBS.

Love at two-and-twenty is a terribly intoxicating draught.—*Ruffini.*

T was long after midnight, a sweet, starry midnight, when Mrs. Seymour rose to her feet. "Now, children," she said, "I'm off to bed. I really cannot keep awake any longer."

The four children rose also.

"I'm afraid you set your beloved children a horribly bad example, mother," said Tom, "by such early roosting habits."

Betty Seymour laughed. "I suppose you and Mr. Curtis will stay here until breakfast. Come on, Joan. I vote we go up with mother, or we shall be absolute wrecks to-morrow—or, rather, to-day."

But although the two girls left the men ensconced in arm-chairs and clouds of tobacco, and followed Mrs. Seymour upstairs, they did not retire to bed.

After they had said "Good night" to Mrs. Seymour, and seen her safely into her room, Joan Davenant linked her arm in Betty's as they went along the corridor. "Look here, Bets," she said, with a little laugh, "we've missed any beauty sleep we might have had. Let's get into dressing-gowns and sit and talk. I want to ask you something very important."

"I think it's about time we both went to bed," said Betty.

"Well, we will, presently," said Joan. Her eyes twinkled mischievously as she left Betty at the door of her bedroom. "I'll creep in to you in about five minutes, and I'll bring some cigarettes. They're a wonderful help in giving good advice."

Betty went in. She gave a big sigh, and got out of her frock and into a dressing-gown with a frown puckering her forehead. There was evidently something the matter, or else why should a very pretty girl of two-and-twenty, whose handicap at golf was down to six, whose dance programme was packed with names within five minutes of her entrance into every ballroom, and whose whole existence was alight with perpetual sunshine, be ushering in the holiday month with sighs and frowns?

The matter was Michael Curtis—Mikky, as he was called affectionately by the Oxford Fifteen, and with some awe by the Light Blues. Mikky stood about six feet four in carpet slippers, and tipped the beam at fifteen stone, so that he was very much the matter. Add to this fair hair, with a most exasperating kink in it, blue eyes, and a set of very white, even teeth, plus the fact that he was Tom Seymour's great friend, and had spent many vacations in the Seymour establishment, and it will not be difficult to understand why Tom's sister should be indulging in sighs and frowns.

Mikky had one other characteristic which makes the position even clearer. Although his equal as a tackler had never been found, and his exuberance on Rugger nights had led to several of the London constabulary painfully making his acquaintance, yet he invariably suffered from a deadly self-consciousness when in the society of the opposite sex. He called himself impolite names and endeavoured to take himself severely in hand, but, up to the present moment of the year of grace nineteen hundred and twelve, he had not succeeded in conquering it.

Betty was puzzling out this difficult question when Joan opened the door quietly and slipped in. She was very much awake, in spite of the lateness of the hour, and a rather quizzical expression came into her eyes as she noticed Betty's frown.

"Let's switch off the light. It's so much more charming with only the moonlight."

She did so before Betty could make any answer, and then they pulled up chairs to the window. Joan produced a cigarette case.

"Have one?" she asked.

"No, thanks," said Betty—"I don't feel quite like it."

Joan smiled, and lit one for herself. "Do you know what this is, besides being the first of August?"

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"With a little gasp, Mikky stooped."

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"Grouse-shooting, do you mean?"

"Try again," said Joan, with a laugh.

Betty thought for a moment and then gave it up.

Joan leaned forward and placed her hand on the other girl's arm. "Still Leap Year," she whispered.

"Well, I don't see——" A blush spread over Betty's face, and told Joan more plainly than any words that her meaning was plain.

For some time there was no sound in that charming bedroom except the sighing of the summer wind. Outside the trees rustled, and the far-off rumble of a train came faintly to the ears of the two girls who sat gazing at the night, one with her chin in her hands, and her brain a tumult of thoughts, the other quietly smoking her cigarette and watching her friend out of the corner of an amused brown eye.

"Well," said Joan at last, "how does it strike you?"

"I don't see what you mean," said Betty; but the tone of voice in which she made the remark only increased Miss Joan Davenant's smile.

"Were we or were we not at school together for eight years?" asked that young lady. "Own up, now—it's Mikky."

Betty got out of her chair and sat herself down quickly at Joan's feet. "Don't laugh," she said. "It *is*, and I'm very unhappy."

The cigarette suddenly found itself discarded, and the hand that had held it closed tenderly on Betty's shoulder.

"Don't think me a complete pig," said Joan. "Of course I shan't laugh at you, Bets. I'll do anything I can to help, and I think he's a dear."

Betty sighed openly. "I don't think there's anything to do except wait and see if he likes me."

Joan chuckled. "Likes you!" she echoed. "My dear, he stands about in corners and gazes at you as if he were a perfect loony! And if that isn't a sure sign, I should like to know what is."

"Of course, I've been conceited enough to imagine that he is in love with me," said Betty, though not in a decidedly humble tone, "but it's so much more convincing to hear you say he is."

Joan began to stroke the beautiful head which rested against her knees. "Why do you say conceited enough?" she asked. "Isn't it a man's one object in life to fall in love? And, besides, there are very few men good enough for *us!* As to Mikky's being really in love with you, I can give you conclusive proof."

Betty swished round to face her school friend, and fixed her eyes eagerly on those of Joan. "*Can* you? What is it?"

"The proof is," said Joan, "that he doesn't take the least notice of *me*, and there are not many men of his age who ignore me, I can assure you."

Betty studied the position from the new light of this comforting assurance. Joan Davenant was far from being a wallflower: her good looks and impish expression saw to that for her. So Betty began to glow with the feeling of certainty inspired by her friend's "conclusive proof." She felt that, if she could only break down the man's absurd shyness, he would—that is, all would be well. But at the back of her head there remained the uncomfortable thought that he would not broach the subject unaided. She remembered, too, many instances when they had happened to be left alone together in the same room. Mikky, however energetically he might have been talking with her brother a minute before, invariably relapsed into a nervous and horrible silence. Nothing she said could drag more than monosyllables from him, and relief was mutual when somebody came in.

From the ripe experience of a long twenty-two years, Joan read the man like an open book, and now she gave judgment. "Leap Year," she stated with unanswerable dogmatism, "was invented for just such cases as yours. If you don't propose to him, someone else will snap him up, and you will be left as a sort of grass widow."

"Oh, Joan, how *can* you?" gasped Betty. The idea of proposing to a man was so startling that she could not—dared not—think of it.

But Joan remained perfectly cool. "It's quite easy. You simply wait for the right moment when no one is about—and that's where I come in—and then you say: 'Oh, by the way, do you look upon me as a sister, or something more?' Then, if he gasps and flounders—being Mikky, he probably will—you cut in quickly and say that you think he likes you, and that you wouldn't mind marrying him if he had the courage to ask you."

During Joan's burst of oratory, Betty had never blushed so much in her life. The idea of saying such things to an enormous person like Mikky made her shiver with fright. "I should never have the pluck," she whispered.

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"My dear child," said Joan, feeling more and more motherly, "you've only got to remember that *he* is shy and *you* are not, and then you'll be master of the situation from the very beginning. It's so simple, and so soon over."

She rose and grasped Betty by both shoulders. "You *know* that it isn't because he can't afford to marry that he doesn't propose. The only reason is shyness. Well, then, to-morrow — that is, to-day — after lunch, I'll see to it that you are left alone with him. Be a sportsman and burn your boats. Take your niblick, so to speak, and get yourself out of this wretched bunker in which you have been so long."

For a moment the two girls remained eye to eye. A distant clock struck two. Betty was breathing quickly, as if she had been taking violent exercise.

"Will you do it?"

Betty clenched her hands. "Yes," she said, "I will."

Breakfast was an unstable meal with the Seymours. It made its lonely appearance at nine o'clock sharp, but if the fatigue of the preceding day made you reluctant to wake after the early tea, you were at perfect liberty to turn over and go on making the morning hideous with your snores.

Mrs. Seymour was almost invariably the first down, but if ever she showed the least sign of becoming conceited about it, her offsprings pointed out, with unquestionable logic, that she was always first to bed.

Next morning the breakfast table was not put to any use until the clock had forgotten how long it was since it had struck ten. Then Mrs. Seymour, her son, and Mikky, appeared simultaneously, and it was not until they had nearly finished that the two girls made their appearance.

Mrs. Seymour kissed them affectionately, at the same time shaking her forefinger warningly. "Late nights don't agree with you, Betty, as well as they do with Joan."

Mikky's eyes, after a monosyllabic morning greeting, did not wander from his plate. Tom Seymour, however, cast a searching brotherly eye at both girls to see why his mother had made the remark. What he saw simply justified it. Joan's face sparkled with suppressed excitement. Judging from her radiant complexion, she might have been in bed some three hours before midnight instead of nearly three hours after. Betty, however, had lines under her eyes, and she seemed white and tired. Instead of her usual light-hearted badinage, she hardly spoke, and, beyond drinking a cup of coffee, she made no breakfast. She toyed with the plate which her brother put before her, and then pushed it away.

Mikky, in the middle of an ardent discussion between Joan and his friend, looked quickly across at Betty. He thought it was unobserved, but Joan saw the frown of anxiety and sympathy which showed his distress at the girl's tiredness.

"How soon will you be ready for golf?" asked Tom. "We've got to have that return foursome this morning."

Betty telegraphed frantic messages to Joan, with the result that Joan, with the utmost calmness, although the match had been definitely fixed up, announced that they were not keen on golf, as they felt a little fagged, but that they might possibly play after lunch.

"I hope you're not feeling as rotten as you look, Bets, old girl," said Tom, with real brotherly sympathy.

Betty laughed nervously. "I'm afraid I am," she said. "Why don't you two boys go and play a match this morning?"

Mikky looked across at her. "We'd both much rather not play if you can't come," he said. "Shall we bridge this morning, and not golf at all?"

Joan leaped to her feet. "Bridge! Certainly not. Betty and I are off by ourselves this morning. We're going for a long walk to blow away the cobwebs."

"Can't we come?" asked Tom plaintively. "What have we done that you should want to desert us in this wicked manner? And Mikky's leaving us to-morrow."

"It's what you've not done," said Joan quickly. "Come along, Bets!" The two girls hurriedly retired, and shortly afterwards Mrs. Seymour left the room on domesticity bent.

"Something's up," said Tom, nodding his head cannily.

Mikky thoughtfully lit a pipe. "I think we'd better clear out on to the links. I'm afraid we kept your sister up too late last night."

"No, I don't think it's that," said Tom. "Betty's as strong as a horse—she's hipped about something. However, I dare say it'll blow over. Let's get a move on. I feel like beating you this morning."

The two girls watched the men sally forth, and, when they were safely out of sight, went out in the opposite direction.

"Did you know that he is going to-morrow?" asked Joan.

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"No," said Betty.

Joan chuckled. "I'm not sure," she said, "that nervousness doesn't make you look even more interesting than usual. By the way, how old is Mikky?"

"Twenty-nine," said Betty promptly. "He came down from Oxford seven years ago with Tom, and they're the same age."

"I suppose he'll be a K.C. before very long. Rather nice, *I* think, to be a Mrs. K.C."

By the time they got back to lunch, Betty felt that she had been walking for hundreds of years. She was dead tired, horribly out of temper with Joan, with her mother, with Tom, with Mikky, with the whole world, and the meal was a nightmare. It seemed to take the servants years to clear away the dishes, and when at last they adjourned to the drawing-room, she felt as if nothing mattered. Life was an absurd farce, and Mikky was an idiot, an utter fool.

She hardly realised what was happening when Joan went across to Mrs. Seymour and whispered something. But when her mother exclaimed, "*Really*, my dear?" and hurriedly left the room, a spasm of terror ran through her.

She was on the point of rising and hurrying out, when Joan patted her shoulder with a reassuring grin, and was followed out by Tom.

Betty found herself left alone face to face with the herculean Mikky, and she lay back in her chair trembling. The absolute horror of the situation appalled her. How could she possibly have dared to dream of asking a man to marry her? It was awful. She felt dumb with fright. Her hands were as cold as ice, and for five minutes she sat there in silence, wondering what this man—she couldn't think of him any more as Mikky—was doing. She didn't dare turn her head to look at him.

Mikky was sitting in utter silence, pulling frantically at a cigarette, and looking at Betty from time to time with the most agonised expression. Suddenly he threw down his cigarette and rose to his feet with a deep breath.

Betty just saved herself from giving a piercing shriek. He stood towering over her with a most curious expression in his eyes. He had guessed! He knew why she was there! He was waiting for her to ask him! Her heart thumped inside her, and then seemed to stop beating altogether.

"Er—excuse me a second," said Mikky. He crossed over and went towards the door.

"Thank Heaven, he's going!" thought Betty.

Mikky did not go, however. Instead, he turned the key in the lock and came quickly back with clenched hands.

"Look here," he said abruptly, "I'm going to-morrow. May I—may I smoke?"

Betty nodded.

The man who weighed fifteen stone took out a cigarette and lit it with a hand that trembled.

"Thank you," he said.

He took three puffs and then laid it down in an ash-tray, caught hold of the mantelpiece with both hands, gripping it as if he would like to break it. "I'm an awful ass at this game," he said, "as I've never played it before, but I want to tell you that I—that I love you, and—and will you marry me?"

For a moment Betty gazed at his massive back. Then she covered her face with her hands and burst into hysterical laughter. It was too much for her. All the agony and strain of that ghastly morning had upset her nerves.

Mikky jumped as if he had been shot, and swung round facing her.

"I—I'm most awfully sorry," he said. "Perhaps I'd—I'd better go, eh?"

Betty took her hands away from her face. Two tears started chasing each other down her cheeks. "Oh, Mikky!" she said softly.

With a little gasp, Mikky stooped, caught hold of her, and folded her in his arms.

* * * * *

"What did he say when you proposed to him?" asked Joan quickly, bursting with curiosity, as soon as the bedroom door was shut.

"Nothing," said Betty.

"Nothing! What on earth do you mean?"

"I didn't propose to him," said Betty. "I couldn't have done it. He proposed to me."

An expression of bitter disappointment came over Joan's face. "Oh, Betty, you rotter!" she said. "What *is* the good of Leap Year?"

Betty gave a sigh of complete happiness. "Thank Heaven, I don't know!"

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THE ACE OF HEARTS.

By FRED M. WHITE,

Author of "The Crimson Blind," "The Law of the Land," etc.

THE little man with the white face and gleaming eyes struggled no longer. He was spent and breathless; a little, thin, red thread trickled from a wound in his forehead. He had dropped to his knees in the snow. Above him the pine trees tossed and twisted in the blizzard, the thin white powder stung his cheek. He looked a pathetic object enough, and all the more slender and helpless by contrast with the three Westerners who stood about him. There was no suggestion of pity or compunction in the eyes of those picturesque ruffians. The little man was looking for no mercy—indeed, that was an asset he had not counted upon for a moment. He was not going to ask for quarter, either. His life hung upon a thread, and he knew it.

"Wal, ain't you goin' to speak?" the leader of the trio asked. "We ain't out shootin' rabbits. We ain't goin' to spell it for you, either. What we want to know, and what we're goin' to know, is the name of the man who rounded up poor Bill Carney. You was present, and you seen it done."

"I guess that's so," the little man snapped, "but you can't make me speak if I don't want to."

The leader of the gang smiled grimly.

"I calculate we can," he said. "Now, just you listen to me, stranger. I dunno as you know much about these parts, but there's considerable snow comin'—a matter o' six feet before mornin'. Now, I'll kinder draw your attention to that pine branch what's hangin' over your head. The programme, sonny, is to tie your hands behind you an' put a rawhide round your neck, so's to keep you dancin' on the tips of your toes. The other end of the rawhide will be round the pine branch. When the snow comes up to your neck, you sing out for the waiter. He won't be far off. An' the beauty of the game is that you can call our hand whenever you like."

The little man said nothing. He pressed his lips more tightly together, and his eyes gleamed like slumbering fires.

Over his head the pines were tossing and moaning like creatures in pain. The upper branches were hidden in the flying wrack of snow; already in the hollow there the white battalions of the storm were beginning to assemble. The little man made no movement of any kind as his hands were secured behind him and the rawhide adjusted. The end of the rope was cast dexterously over the branch and drawn tightly—so tightly, indeed, that the victim could merely feel the frozen ground with his toes.

"Now, for the last time," the chief ruffian asked, "are you goin' to spell it or not? A white man was Bill Carney—there ain't a whiter man on the Amurican continent, 'ceptin', p'raps, Captain Rufus himself—an' we ain't goin' to set down shellin' popcorn while high-minded citizens is bein' shot like dogs."

The little man turned with a bitter sneer.

"Never a greater skunk drew the breath of life than Carney," he said; "and if there is a more poisonous reptile up here, it's the man you call Captain Rufus. I saw Carney shot—I know whose hand it was that rid the world of a loathsome scoundrel. He was killed in fair fight by a better man than himself, and you can tell Rufus that his time is coming, too."

"Hear him talk!" another of the gang laughed. "Anybody might think as he was David Hames. Ever see him, sonny?"

"More than once," the little man said quietly. "He doesn't come this way, I understand. It will be a bad day for you and your kidney if he does take it in his head to come into the Lone Wolf district. Any of you know him?"

Apparently none of them did, though they seemed to listen in respectful silence to that dreaded name. The snow was getting deeper now; the little man's face was more drawn and livid, yet there was no sign of surrender

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in his eyes. With an oath, the leader of the gang turned away, bidding his companions to follow him. There was a hut on the far side of the hollow, where it would be possible to while away the time over a game of poker, till, in the picturesque language of Pete Stanley, the little man decided to throw up the sponge and "spell it." That the stranger would eventually essay the task in question, Mr. Stanley did not for a moment doubt. He was an expert in these matters.

An hour passsed slowly. The snow was getter deeper, and the little man's face was whiter than the powder on his hair, yet his jaw was fixed and rigid, and the unconquerable fires were still burning in his eyes. The howling wind dropped for a moment, and it seemed to the man standing half-frozen there as if someone above was calling him. He turned his head, and, to his astonishment, made out the figure of a woman crawling painfully along the branch of the pine from which the rope was suspended. He could see the dull gleam of a knife in her hand. The rigid tension snapped, a black wisp lay for a moment breathless and half insensible on the snow, then the little man rose and climbed painfully up the slope to the spot where the woman was standing.

"I live close by," she whispered. "I had occasion to go down to the hut, and I heard what those men were talking about. I am Doctor Winter's wife."

"I know him," the little man said. "Can you give me shelter? I shall be a different man to-morrow. And you need not be afraid, especially if you have any arms in the house."

"There is no lack of those," Mrs. Winter said. "But pray come along quickly, before those dreadful men find out that you have escaped. Lean on my arm, please."

Very gradually life and strength came back to the little man. He exchanged his wet clothes for dry ones, the grateful warmth of the stove thawed out his frozen limbs; a good meal had put fresh steel and fire in him. He sat up suddenly, rigid and alert.

"Those men are outside," he whispered; "they have discovered my escape. They'll want to search the house. You look like a brave woman, Mrs. Winter."

"I had to learn that after I came out from England," the woman said quietly. "I'm not going to give you up, if that is what you mean. I will do exactly what you suggest."

The little man reached for a rifle and handled it with loving care. He pushed aside a corner of the blind and looked out. Surely enough, the three ruffians were standing there, apparently having an altercation of some kind. There was a small ventilator by the side of the window, which might be useful, a little later on, as a porthole. The altercation was apparently finished now, for Stanley strode up to the door and began to thunder on it furiously.

"Come out, come out!" he cried. "We don't want to hurt a woman, but you've got a man hiding there. It won't pay you or the doctor to defy us. Now, open the door."

"I open the door to no man in my husband's absence," Kate Winter cried defiantly, "and I warn you that I'm armed."

Stanley muttered an oath in his beard and stalked back to his companions. The plan of attack soon became apparent, for two of the ruffians opened fire on the hut, whilst Stanley proceeded to drag a huge log of timber forward, obviously with the intention of battering in the door. He would be fairly safe so long as the other two directed their fire on the windows of the house. With a bitter smile on his white face, the little man lifted his rifle on the edge of the ventilator and covered Stanley. There was a crack, a tiny puff of smoke, and Stanley pitched forward heavily in the snow, lying there still and motionless. Once more the rifle spoke; a second man spun round on his heels and then sank gently on his knees, as if he were dropping innocently off to sleep. The third man dived for cover, and was seen no more.

Kate Winter dropped into a chair and covered her face with her hands. The little man could see that she was shivering like a leaf.

"I had to do it," he said. "It was their lives against yours and mine. You don't know those men—I do. There are four of them who have been keeping a reign of terror in Lone Wolf Gulch for years. There were five of them a little time ago, but the man called Carney died suddenly last week. And because I would not tell those ruffians who shot him, they were going to leave me to perish in the snow. They got me at a disadvantage for the first time in my life, but they would have dragged nothing out of me. Besides, it would never have done to have told them the name of the man who killed Bill Carney."

"Did you really know it?" the woman asked.

A queer, dry smile twisted the little man's lips.

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"Well, considering that I shot him myself, yes," he said. "Fortunately for me, those dogs didn't know that. Some old friends of mine fetched me from five hundred miles the other side of the mountains, to help wipe out Captain Rufus and his gang. There does not seem to be much law and order in these parts, and they say that the sheriff's in league with those ruffians. Well, at any rate, I've accounted for three of them now, and the captain himself will hear from me before long. Not that I want this thing

"His hands were secured behind him and the rawhide adjusted."

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talked about. I should like you to have the credit of this little entertainment."

"Oh, I couldn't!" Kate Winter cried.

"Just a moment," the little man urged. "Let it be understood that Stanley and some of the gang attacked the house, and that you shot two of them single-handed. Depraved as those scoundrels are, they would never dare to take vengeance on a woman. You will have public opinion on your side, and this exploit should go far to bringing about a better state of things. There are hundreds of brave men and good citizens in these parts, and yet they hesitate to act for fear of incurring the displeasure of Rufus and his murderous gang. They'll have to do something now."

"My husband is a busy man," Mrs. Winter murmured, "and it does not do for a doctor to make enemies. We want a real live man here—somebody who can get the best of Rufus, somebody who dare meet him face to face. Ah, if we could only have a man like David Hames to come to our assistance!"

The little man smiled again.

"To beard Rufus in his den, eh? To shoot him down in the midst of his satellites when he is drinking in his favourite bar? Well, that might be done. A man like Rufus always has more enemies than friends. The carneying crowd of sycophants who would applaud some cowardly deed of violence would be still more willing to cheer the man who rid the world of a creature like Rufus; and that is what I have come over five hundred miles to do."

The man spoke quite simply and naturally. Small as he was, and slight of frame, there was a suggestion of strength and force behind him that robbed his words of any shade of egotism.

"I'd like to stay here a day or two, if I might," he said, "then I will go on to Gulch City."

As things turned out, however, it was the best part of a week before the little man with the white face and the burning eyes quitted the friendly shelter of the doctor's house. The story of the attack, and the death of Stanley and his companion, had travelled far over the snow-clad hills and valleys. Mrs. Winter's exploit had come as something of a sensation in that lonely province. People had flocked from far and near to attend the funeral of Stanley and his companion; the wild-cat papers in the district had lost no time in making a heroine of Kate Winter. She bore her honours as meekly as she could—she was longing for the time when the truth could be told. Wild and lawless men had come down from the hills—though they were clean-handed men, for the most part—and they had told with bated breath of the vengeance which Captain Rufus was going to take later on. Still, the sluggish blood of the countryside was stirred now, and there were rumours of reprisals. If Rufus was disturbed by these, he showed no sign of it. Up in Gulch City he reigned supreme, surrounded by a horde of flatterers, insolent and intolerant in the face of an executive that was practically powerless. But there were one or two observant sympathisers who brought insinuations that Rufus had been a little more moody of late, and that, to all practical purposes, he stood alone. From the day of Stanley's death the third man had not been seen.

It was one cold and bitter night, a fortnight later, that the little man with the white face crept quietly into Jake Tomlin's saloon and took his seat by the stove. He was so situated that he had his back to an angle of the wall, and it was impossible for anybody to approach from behind. The big room was packed with gamblers and drinkers; in the centre of the floor an engrossing game of poker was in progress. The big man with the coarse, red hair and long, fiery beard, the little man recognised at a glance. He needed no one to tell him that this was the quarry he was in search of. In all the region of wild farce, it seemed impossible to conceive anything more ridiculous than a duel to the death between these two men.

It was only for a few moments that the stranger passed unnoticed. His mild air and manner was bound to attract attention. But the chaff, rude as it was, had a good-natured flavour about it, and the little man sat there smilingly indifferent. A burst of raucous laughter a little louder than the rest attracted the attention of Rufus. He had been drinking heavily; he was in a winning vein, as the pile of greasy dollar notes by his side testified. He raised his great red head and glanced in the little man's direction.

"Where does the child come from?" he asked.

The sycophants laughed loudly—the saloon rocked with their mirth. The little man's lips grew a little harder, but the smile was still on his face.

"I came here with a message," he drawled.

"Well, expectorate it," Rufus said.

"That's very polite of you," the little

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man went on. "As a matter of fact, my message is for you, sir. I had it directly from the lips of David Hames himself."

Rufus's red face took on a purple tinge. At the mention of that dreaded name, the saloon was stricken into absolute silence. The men loafing there could see the veins standing out on Rufus's forehead, they could see his beard bristling and crackling like the hair on a cat's back when it is stroked in the dark.

"Does Hames want to see me?" he demanded hoarsely.

"He is here for that very purpose," the little man said. "He will be along presently. I ask your pardon for interfering in your game in this rude way. Will you please continue until Mr. Hames arrives?"

"Perhaps he would like to come and take a hand," Rufus sneered. "I'll play him for his life. It's a big place, is this American continent of ours, but there's no room on it for David Hames and myself. You'll see some fun presently, boys. You're going to have the time of your lives. I've been just praying for a chance like this. It's real polite on Dave's part to come here, and save me the trouble of going to his funeral."

Rufus looked round for the customary flattering laughter. But no sound came, nothing but an uneasy breathing and shuffling amongst the greasy mass of humanity there. The dreaded name of David Hames had made a deep impression, and not the most drunken of the loafers there but who could have told, had he only dared, which of the twain he held in highest reverence. That Hames should have dared to come there, to have sent a polite message in this fashion, was a staggering proof of his marvellous courage.

For, according to all the rules of the game, Hames's hands were clean, whilst those of Rufus were not. The red man was a fugitive from justice, more than one man's blood was on his head, and it would have been accounted no discreditable thing had Hames covered his man from the doorway and shot him before the latter could get his hand to his hip pocket.

Rufus burst into a storm of uneasy curses. He was irritated to find that he could not meet the glance of the little, white-faced man opposite. He was furious, too, to feel that his gallery were deserting him.

"Any of you ever seen Hames?" he growled.

Nobody responded. Evidently no member of that fragrant company had ever set eyes on the redoubtable Hames. Rufus reached out his hand for the cards and began a fresh deal.

"Let's try and forget it for a minute or two," he growled. "And if Mr. Hames comes along, tell him to wait till I've finished."

The game proceeded in absolute silence. For the next quarter of an hour Rufus was winning steadily. Then a voice cut the silence—a voice sharp and commanding, so that Rufus raised his head and glared in the direction from whence the sound came.

"Anybody speaking to me?" he challenged.

"I am," the little man snapped. "Put up your left hand, quick!"

The whole bar rocked with excitement, for every man there thrilled as if that clear, ringing voice had been a blow. The little man had changed almost beyond recognition. His face appeared as if carved out of marble, his mouth and chin were as rigid as fine steel, his dark eyes were full of fire, his whole being bristled with nervous vitality.

"Did—did you speak to me?" Rufus stammered.

"Put up your hand," was the reply.

Rufus was gazing into the hollow rim of a Colt, which he knew by instinct was trained upon his heart. Slowly and reluctantly his left hand went up, with the hairy back of it turned in the direction of the breathless spectators.

"Drop it on the table," the little man commanded.

"There's nothing to drop, curse you!" Rufus screamed.

A tiny spurt of flame flicked from the mouth of the Colt, and, as if by magic, a thread of blood trickled down the back of Rufus's hand. As his arm collapsed, something fluttered from his nerveless fingers and lay upon the floor.

"Pick it up," the little man snapped.

One of the crowd stooped eagerly and raised the greasy square of pasteboard.

"It's the ace of hearts," he cried, "and there's a bullet-hole right through the middle of it! Gee whiz, but that was a bit of dandy shooting! Did your father teach you to draw a bead like that, little man?"

"Guess he's a pupil of David Hames!" another cried. "Say, sonny, when's David going to happen along?"

"I *am* David Hames, curse you all!" the little man snarled. "Now, Rufus, stand up, you dog!"

But Rufus made no motion towards getting

up. He sat there red and sullen, with something suggestive of tears in his eyes. He nursed his injured hand. He was quivering from head to foot with pain and anguish, and a certain feeling he could not place, but which, had he but known it, was shame.

"Get up, you cur!" Hames cried. "None of your shuffling excuses for me. You have your right arm still. Now, then, you cheat, you palmer of cards, the day has come for our reckoning. How much longer do you suppose you would be allowed to delude these poor fools here? How long has he been cheating you all like this?"

A dissipated wreck from the bar spoke up.

"Rufus always wins," he said. "I never did think he was of much account myself."

Hames laughed contemptuously.

"Are you going to take that lying down, Rufus?" he asked. "Have you not got pluck enough to resent an insult from a drunken wreck like that? Why, there's not a child in the camp who wouldn't slap his face for him! Now, then, get out your shooting-iron, and we will fight across the table. I've been looking forward with pleasure for many a long day to this meeting. I might have shot you as I came in to-night, but that is not my way. There are white men and clean men in Gulch City—indeed, I can see plenty of them round me now—and when I realise that fact, I marvel that you have not been lying in your grave for many a year. But I'm wasting your time and mine. Your gun, Rufus!"

Captain Rufus dropped his head upon his hands and burst into a flood of tears. A laugh cut the silence, then the whole saloon swayed with ribald, mocking mirth. Hames held up his hand for silence. He pointed to the figure huddled over the table.

"I'm going to leave him to you presently," he said; "you will know how to deal with that cowardly skunk there. And there is not one of you who would not have rejoiced to see his back long ago. I'm going to tell you something. I was asked to come to these parts to take a hand in wiping out Rufus and his gang. I gladly came, because it was a pleasure to me to do so. The first man I came in contact with was Carney. He happened to recognise me, and—well, you know what became of him. Then there was Stanley and two other rowdy blackguards whose names I don't know. They happened to catch me unawares, and for an hour or two my life wasn't worth a dime. You see, they had found out that I saw Carney die, and they wanted to know who killed him. I couldn't very well tell them that, could I, boys? It was a close call, and if it had not been for the bravery of a woman, Rufus would still be here swaggering and bullying and cheating you out of your money as usual. I want to tell you, boys, that it was Mrs. Winter who saved me. And she is anxious for me to tell you that it was I who shot Stanley and his companion, and not she. If you were not an indolent, careless lot, you would have rid yourself of this cowardly, murderous bully long ago. At any rate, you ought to know what to do with him. You are acquainted with the quaint and interesting ceremony which usually takes place in a community like this when a distinguished citizen is invited to travel. So far as I am concerned, I make you a present of Rufus."

"Ain't you going to kill him?" a voice drawled.

"Kill him!" Hames sneered. "Do you think I'd soil my hands with carrion like that? Whatever the faults of the other members of the gang might have been, they were *men*. That poor creature snivelling on the table there is nothing but a craven coward. Oh, there are plenty of his sort about in the mining camps—the West is infested with them."

Hames turned upon his heel and, with a curt nod of his head, made for the door. He had finished with these people, and he wanted no more of them. After all, the expedition had been disappointing. He had hoped for an adventure more full-flavoured than this.

"Say, mister," a voice drawled, "ain't you goin' to wait for the ceremony? We won't keep you long."

"I think I will," Hames said sweetly. "I love the smell of tar, and burnt feathers are most invigorating. Eh, Rufus?"

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THE DUELLIST.

By HALLIWELL SUTCLIFFE,

Author of "Shameless Wayne," "Ricroft of Withens," "Through Sorrow's Gates," etc.

ICHARD LAMBERT came of Quaker stock, though he, and his father before him, had abjured fellowship with that community. Richard, indeed, was known only as Dick to his friends, was a pretty enough fellow with the sword, had a good head for wine when occasion asked it, and was a man of the world he lived in. But heredity has its roots deep in the fibres of a man, and Dick Lambert had one peculiarity that made him conspicuous among the gentry of his day.

He would fight no duel with sword or pistol, though in friendly bouts he showed resource and skilfulness. If insulted flagrantly, he would strike his man—heredity permitted him so much license—and would wait for the return blow. When, instead of that, there came the suggestion of a meeting in the raw of the next dawn, he would decline, but offer to fight it out there and then with naked fists.

The peculiarity marked him out from his fellows as plainly as if he had worn the Quaker dress of his forefathers. His enemies were derisive, his friends puzzled, but neither friend nor enemy doubted Dick Lambert's courage; he had proved it in too many ways for even the tongue of slander to assail it.

He went his way, obstinate in this one matter, debonair and easy-going in all others. And then it happened that he met first love face to face; and when a man reaches thirty before going through a trial of that sort, it is apt to take him hard.

Miss Landale was the spoiled beauty in town that year. Men toasted her, and women envied. She had all that most women crave for, and yet felt something lacking till Dick Lambert came into her life. The bigness of him, the gaiety, appealed to her; but what touched her heart, deep under casual liking, was the north country grace, the strength and reticence that went with him like a suit of armour. However lightly he took life, however well he danced or passed light banter, there was a something behind it all—a something not austere, but strong, unbreakable as well-forged steel.

Miss Landale's intimates said that she was wilful and light-headed, with a tongue that spared none who crossed her whims. And it was true, so far as eighteen years of life had taken her. In all things she was the last woman that Dick Lambert should have chosen to fall in love with, so far as their world judged them both.

Their courtship was a comedy of errors. He persisted in treating her as if she were too remote—like the stars—for anything but distant worship. The wonder of his love made casual folk seem better than themselves, and Miss Landale a queen among them. And she, in her light-hearted way, wished that he would treat her as a woman, not as the high priestess of his dreams.

Comedy of this sort is apt to turn suddenly to tragedy, if the combatants are both strong of purpose. It is not good for any man to care so much for any woman, because he sets her possibly a task beyond her strength.

At any rate, Miss Landale grew weary of the finest worship she had found so far in life. She had a headstrong wish to cure Lambert of his high regard for her, to bring him down to the world of everyday, to lash the stiffness out of him.

A rumour came to her that he had declined another duel. All the town was laughing at it, saying that Lambert's north country tendency to fight with naked fists should have been tamed long ago by southern etiquette of coffee for four and swords or pistols for two. Yet none had named him coward, because the lie would have found credit nowhere where men foregathered.

Dick Lambert met her, on the night the rumour reached her, at my Lady Glentallis' ball. He was her cavalier, for all the room to see, as always, and, after they had danced, she went very willingly with him into one of

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the sequestered corners planned by my lady —herself a happy wife—for courtship. His heart was on fire, because she was so kind to him, so willing and so pleased to sit beside him.

"Nora," he began, "let's end it, one way or the other——"

"Oh, by your leave, you're going to ask my hand again, for the third time—or is it the fourth? One forgets when men are so persistent."

"You'll be pleased, then, to give me a plain 'Yes' or 'No.' I never liked half measures."

"Oh, la, la!" she said, with the bantering smile that maddened him. "You gentry of the north are queer wooers. *You* like, or do not like. By your leave, sir, it is the lady's likes that are in case at these times. Shall I tell you what I like in a man?"

She paused, watching him with bright, steady eyes. It was in her heart to wound him—to wound him cruelly—and she chose her words with dainty care.

"I ask for strength, sir, and a pleasant tongue that knows how to mix the sweet and bitter when it flatters, and the bearing of a gentleman. These you have."

Her voice was so gentle that Lambert waited. He did not care to be praised to his face—least of all, by Miss Landale—but the temporary embarrassment was of slight account if she were yielding after his long pursuit.

"He must be ready with the sword," she went on. "Suppose, sir, I gave my life into a husband's keeping—suppose he heard my name slighted, and would not avenge it at break of the next day?"

She had drawn blood, and for a moment was afraid of him. He was so passionate in this sudden strength, this fury that found quiet speech.

"Your name is beyond gossip, Miss Landale; there's no man fool enough to smirch it."

"Oh, is there not? Faith, then, you're more innocent than I guessed. Women may have lived once on pedestals, but nowadays the world is—why, just the world we know, you and I. Its tongue is sharp and busy."

"Well, then?" he asked, still with the same quiet hardness.

"I am curious, that is all. They say you've declined another duel, and I flushed red with shame for you. It would be better to hurt you now, and have done with it—see how I'm learning your downright manners—than to keep you at my apron-strings. I am embarrassed by the attentions of a cavalier who fears to be killed in the raw of the dawning."

"You say that deliberately?" he asked at last.

"How else? If a man decline a quarrel of that sort, he fears it."

Again he was silent. Miss Landale had wished to strike deep, and it was plain that she had met with entire success; but some victories are dearly purchased.

"You've far to go, child," he said, turning with sudden vehemence, "before you read deep into a man's motives. Let us go back—and dance."

Miss Landale was content. His irony, his bluntness, showed her only that he felt the lash. By and by, perhaps, she would begin to wonder if, after all, her heart was not given already to him.

Her view of him ran exactly counter to the plain result, as it chanced. They met often, she and Lambert, but he was no longer her cavalier, so devoutly in love that all their world looked on and smiled at a passion more fitted to Crusading times than to these sophisticated days of 1812.

Lambert fought no duels, but went about with a gay, indolent air that amazed Miss Landale. He played the part of light love banter to perfection with many ladies who chose that form of recreation. He danced amazingly well, passed flattery as nicely chiselled as his face, and was as near the perfect butterfly as any man northern bred can hope to be. With Miss Landale he was the same bendable, suave gentleman that he was to fifty other women, and their world—and Miss Landale herself—wondered what had happened to Dick Lambert.

Then he disappeared from London, and gossip got abroad that this gallant with the queer weakness for declining duels had volunteered for service abroad with the army that was fighting Bonaparte. And gossip was true for once. The Quaker instinct in him, like the touch of a dead hand on his sword-arm, had made Dick Landale reluctant to kill an Englishman, yet it permitted him to go overseas against the enemies of England. The thing was not logical according to strict Quaker usage, but then no man's heart is logical in times of stress.

As he crossed the Bay, huddled close on the transport ship with soldiers for the most part as seasick as himself, as he rode forward, short of rations for horse and man, to join the main body of the army, he kept

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one issue before him in his dour, north country way. He would forget Miss Landale, and would keep alive her taunt that he feared to be killed in the red of the dawning. Indeed, he prayed to God very often that he might take clean out of his heart the fine regard he had offered to a woman who had taunted him with cowardice.

He was wrong in that, because Miss Landale was a child yet, not a woman. She had been playing in the nursery that night when her tongue was sharp, and he, as a grown man, had not understood the child's play.

The mistake served him well enough, because it hardened him for a campaign that allowed little room for sentiment. Fatigue and danger were with him so often that he grew to love them like tried comrades. He did some foolish things in face of odds that seemed impossible; and, when he had survived these escapades, it surprised him that promotion came with extreme rapidity. It was all so simple to him in the doing, neither asking praise nor deserving it; for the old conceit of bright eyes helping a man forward through the din of battle, is well enough for songs in time of peace, but in war the man goes furthest, maybe, who is seeking to forget that kind of blandishment.

At any rate, Dick Lambert's luck was amazing. The big battles of that hard campaign found him in the thick of the din. Wherever he was needed, he had the gift of arriving with a readiness, a casual disregard of peril, that touched the ready superstition of the soldiery. Promotion, which he had not coveted, overtook him constantly; but, for himself, he was just a man striving single-mindedly to forget that once he had been fool enough to love Miss Landale.

Miss Landale, before the war was ended, had time to grow out of her teens. News reached her, at long, haphazard intervals, that Dick Lambert was carrying a charmed life. The stay-at-home world of London gossiped more freely now of his battle exploits than ever it had done of his mania for declining duels. And she was glad, but sorry, too, because through all these years no line had reached her from Dick Lambert. He had not found leisure—as other soldiers did who cared for anyone at home—to send her one hurried message that he remembered other days.

He had forgotten, she was compelled to admit at last. And Miss Landale, somehow, grew a little more beautiful with the passing of each year of strain, till her refusal of lovelorn males grew as frequent almost as Dick Lambert's chances of promotion. She waited, in a still, disturbed silence of the heart, until her man came home, and she could read in a second what his eyes had to tell her.

Lambert, meanwhile, found himself near Wellington's iron person at every turn of the game. It was this hard-bitten, northern temperament, joined to a gaiety in face of odds, that the Commander-in-Chief needed most just now. He did not spare Lambert, because the man obviously shrank from the eiderdown of life and all its comforts, except tobacco and good liquor in its season. And most of it, like war itself before the poets trick it up with glamour, was hard, unromantic—the obedience to a discipline that asked much of a man day and night. But it happened that he stepped, travel-stained and unkempt, into that episode of sheer drama which is known to history as the Duchess's Ball.

He had urgent dispatches, and pushed his way through the wondering crowd of revellers with a fine unconcern for their convenience. He had to reach the Duke—that was his plain errand—and he went about it without haste and without delay.

A half hour later there were no men in the ballroom, and presently, from every quarter of Brussels, there rang the beat of hoofs, the steady tramp of feet, the occasional order, sharp like a pistol-shot, given by some officer.

And then it was Waterloo.

When the day ended, Dick Lambert found himself with a sabre-cut on his left shoulder, a bullet through his right thigh, and a great sense of joy and betterment, so far as astounding pain and thirst would allow. The battle had been won. They had told him so, and nothing mattered.

When they gathered him in, an hour or two later, with other wounded lying round him, and brought him in to what passed muster for a hospital, he woke from unconsciousness to find a surgeon ready with his implements.

"No, sir, by your leave," he snapped, glancing down at his wounded thigh. "We'll sink or swim together, I and that leg of mine."

"But it will be mortal if——"

"Let it be mortal, then. Think what a figure I should cut in England, going lame to woo the lady waiting for me there!"

So the surgeon laughed, because he could not help it, and he waited till Lambert found unconsciousness once more. But Lambert was fighting once again, not for king and

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country now, but for the leg on which he placed, maybe, a value out of all proportion. And presently the surgeon passed on, because he had wasted too much time already, and others were clamouring for aid. And, when Dick Lambert woke, after pleasant dreams, he knew that all these years of cold renunciation of Miss Landale, all his wild joy in hardship, were wiped away. He was in pain, and very cold. He forgot it in sheer surprise that he was still fool enough to love a woman who had said that he feared to meet his man in the red of the dawning.

When he returned to England — late, because his wounds healed slowly—he found that the glow of welcome had died down. There had been so many heroes returning from victory, that London, easily surfeited, was growing a little weary of them, and Dick Lambert was glad of this, because he needed rest. Flattery and a court of women round him would have been hardships more severe than he had gone through yet.

For the rest, he had one settled purpose in his mind—to meet Miss Landale again, to find some explanation of the fact that four years of wayfaring had not killed his love for her. He was a difficult lover for any woman to have captured.

Luck again was with him. If he had encountered her face to face round a corner of some London street, she could not have mistaken his sudden flush. As it was, he saw her first across a ballroom. He was standing in a shadowed corner, and she was more beautiful than his dreams of her, because life had taught her much during these last years. And his heart sank. It seemed to him that she must have been vastly happy in his absence; he had not learned even yet that pain of the right sort is the finest chiseller of faces.

Then he grew hard, remembering the taunt that had broken up his courtship and sent him to the wars. The keen, desperate longing for her, shut out by years of hardship and adventure, had returned with a glamour that dismayed him, but he had learned discipline in a rough, unsentimental school.

He found her, when her dance was ended, and claimed her as if no rights of his had been lost by a silence of four years. And Miss Landale wondered if, after all, she would forgive him for that silence. Her common-sense said "No," but women never use that as a rudder when seas are riding at their highest.

They found the sheltered corner from which he had watched her come into his life again, and, glancing up, she was dismayed to see how quiet he was. For her part, she was restless as a ship adrift, and needed him astoundingly.

"The wars have made you dumb, Mr. Lambert," she said, after a troubled silence, "and yet your friends here are never weary of saying what you—what you did."

"Miss Landale, I did nothing. How could I? To your own knowledge, I feared to go out to meet my man in the red of the dawning. You told me as much a long time since."

"You are unforgiving."

"Yes, I'm unforgiving. I feel like the nether millstone my Quaker ancestors used to talk about in the rare moments when they found speech."

He waited, thinking she would recall the taunt; and again the years had taught him little, for he believed that it is in women's power to acknowledge that their prime adversary, the tongue, can be at fault.

They parted in hot anger, and London said that Dick Lambert, a trifling lameness apart, was a new man since he fought at Waterloo. His gaiety was obvious. He was besieged by dowagers, welcomed by men. He had his passport through the London world, and used it freely. And Miss Landale, looking on from afar, wondered that men forgot so soon. She, too, had much to learn.

Three months later a friend came to Dick Lambert's room one morning with a queer, unhappy tale.

"Let's share a bottle, Dick," he said—"something of your strongest, for I feel devilish queer."

All men came to Lambert these days with their troubles; there was something big and stalwart about him that made for trust. Yet even after the wine was brought, and all but finished, his guest seemed loth to talk.

"I begin to understand your loathing of all duels," he said at last. "There was a rout at Vauxhall last night, and young Landale was with us—the pleasantest lad in town, Dick, a lad that hadn't an enemy."

"Yes," said Lambert, playing with his snuff-box. "Yes, I'd go far if that lad needed me."

"Nick Singleton happened to be there."

"The hangman hasn't caught him yet? What a patient folk we English are!"

"You know his way—he's so besotted with his sword skill that he cannot sleep o' nights unless he has a duel ready for him on the morrow. He was deep in wine, and was strolling from one table to another, seeking a

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quarrel somewhere. As ill-luck had it, his eye caught young Landale's, and the devil took him. 'You're too youthful and too pretty, sir,' he said—you know his smooth, gurgling tone. 'Permit me to redden that boy's face of yours.'"

Lambert was growing very restless, but did no more than take another pinch of snuff.

"Landale was up in a moment," went on the other, as if the narrative grew harder to recount, "and—and the rest was played out at break of dawn to-day. I was the poor lad's second, but he had never a chance—never a chance at all."

"Dead?" asked Dick Lambert laconically.

"Oh, yes! Is there another world, Dick? To the bones of me, I hope there is. Nick Singleton will have to see a long procession pass, in that case."

Lambert paced up and down the room with the limp that was his heritage from Waterloo. His friend wondered that he took the thing so calmly—was irritated by his coldness.

"Have you no heart, Dick—no heart?" he asked. "I saw the lad die, and it was not good—not good at all."

"Heart? I don't know. I've been trying to kill it for four years, but it's only scotched, I fancy. Let's have another bottle up.

"You begin to understand my loathing of all duels?" said Lambert by and by. "Why, Jack, I'm just learning what a fool I was!"

His friend, spent with pity, and irascible, wondered what had brought him to seek help in need from this man, who was like a lump of granite rock.

"You've no heart, Dick. I always told you as much."

"Oh, none at all! One rides lighter without that womanish sort of comrade on the pillion. About that daft old Irishman who taught us fence in our young days, Jack? Is he alive yet? With his liking for the bottle, he has no right to be."

"O'Grady? He's alive at sixty, Dick, and seems to grow younger, somehow. I had a bout with him last week, and he worsted me."

"At the old place? Good! We'll just cross Piccadilly, Jack. I thought often of O'Grady when I was over the water. The little things he taught me saved my life once or twice."

They crossed the road, just under the noses of the Prime Minister's leaders, as it happened, while he drove his coach-and-four down to Richmond. The Premier, with his gift of knowing faces at sight, recognised Dick Lambert, and nodded merrily as he pulled up his team.

"Best not die of a broken neck in Piccadilly, Mr. Lambert," he said, "after all you've escaped elsewhere."

"One must die some way or another, sir."

Dick smiled a little grimly as he went on. His friend did not guess what a world of double meaning there was in his response, nor did the Premier guess it as he went spanking down to Richmond.

They came to a little alley that opened on the south side of the thoroughfare, passed down it, and halted at a door familiar to them both. O'Grady was polishing a sword when they went in, and his lined old face was lit with sudden welcome at sight of Lambert.

"Ah, now, I thought you'd forgotten me quite, sir," he protested. "Four years—and the Saints know I've few more to count—and Mr. Lambert too busy to come near me! To be sure, he has been in the thick o' the devilment, and it's there the soul of me was all the time, saving the in-between times when I went to Mass."

Dick Lambert laughed. It was the same O'Grady he had known of yore. And they had a bout or two with the foils, and cracked a few well-worn jests together, until Lambert's friend grew restless. He was astounded that this man could take young Landale's death so easily, and Miss Landale, the lad's sister, had once claimed his heart for all the town to see.

"Dick," he said curtly, "I'm away. This place stifles me, I tell you. I saw enough of sword's play at dawn this morning."

"There'll be supper for two to-night at my lodgings. Don't fail me, Ralph."

The other nodded acceptance with the incivility that friendship at rare intervals allows. When he was gone, Dick Lambert made imaginary feints and passes for a while, with the empty air for opponent, then his face grew desperately grave.

"O'Grady," he said, "you were a father to me in the old days. You always said that I should make a good swordsman, but never a great one."

"Ah, true for ye! It's the gift ye have, sir, and just the little gift more ye lack. Good, but not great, as if you wore a fine coat, sir, but the buttons were missing. It's always the neat finish to a coat that matters."

"O'Grady, you're Irish to the backbone! It's just the buttons off the foils I was thinking of, and you go mixing up the metaphor."

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"Then what d'ye want of me, Mr. Lambert?"

Into Lambert's face flashed the light that no man, knowing the way of men, mistakes. Waterloo was not far off as yet, and there are more ways of blushing than a maid's. "I want to fight a duel, O'Grady!"

"What, no further off than dawn? And it's how am I going to take the cramp out o' your sword-arm between this and the morning? The Peninsular taught us a deal, sir, but, bedad, you're stiff as a pump-handle after the draught!"

"Oh, it's not at dawn—not for a year of dawns unless I'm ready for it. I shall be here six days of the seven, until you make me a great swordsman."

Their friendship found space in which to thrive during the days that followed. Lambert was persistent in the drill that he had set himself. O'Grady watched, with what patience his temperament would allow, for signs of the greatness his pupil coveted, and at a month's end he captured his reward.

"There's the leaven working in ye!" he said, after a sharp bout in which Lambert worsted him. "The Peninsular and all the blood and glory of it never taught ye what you're learning here in Piccadilly."

Lambert went forward day by day. And then O'Grady was late one morning, and found his pupil making wild lunges into space; and the Irishman, though his head was ticking like an eight-day clock, after a night spent too well, found a great cheerfulness. He looked on while Dick, with the ease that comes of settled purpose, when a man thinks himself alone, thrust and parried, feinted, thrust again, with a quiet, "So, Nick Singleton! I've waited very patiently."

A greyness crossed O'Grady's face as he watched it all. The name of Singleton touched an old wound on the raw until it bled. Then he got himself in hand again and closed the door noisily.

They had a fine battle that morning. O'Grady, by long habit, was apt to fence a little better when the eight-day clock was ticking in his head; Dick Lambert was learning much from the steady training he was undergoing, from the ceaseless grip he kept on his main purpose. When they had done, the sweat was running down them, and each had scored a point.

From that day O'Grady took a new pride in his pupil—the pride of a grizzled dog who is teaching a likely pup the way of the world. And from that day he found a curious peace of mind, that had been foreign to him since Nick Singleton, the ragabout and bully, had crossed his own life five years ago. O'Grady, with all his faults, had been a clean liver in the main essentials: and when his one child died—in sorrow and anguish, brought about by Singleton—he had found only his Irish pluck to intervene between himself and madness.

It was an odd friendship that ripened between these two. O'Grady knew the strength and subtlety of Singleton's fence, because he had taught him the most of it years ago. He knew, too, why Dick Lambert was so eager to become a great swordsman before he encountered a hazard known to all duellists in England. He felt, in some odd way, as if a son had come to succour him in his old age—a son who would wipe off the stain from his family honour.

Two weeks later it came home suddenly to O'Grady why Lambert was so apt a pupil. Some fury had driven his Quaker impulses to the winds. There was hatred—a righteous hatred—of the man whose name of Nick Singleton had grown to be a byword.

O'Grady found increasing peace. Lambert was finding greatness at long last of the sort he coveted. He had been a good swordsman in the old days—one in a few hundred, scattered up and down the land—but now he had left the rabble far behind.

There came a morning when O'Grady found himself worsted in three separate encounters, and there was a queer glow as of sunlight in his face.

"I give you my blessing, Mr. Lambert," he said—"indeed, I do. It's yourself that's ready and spoiling for the fight."

So Lambert went out into the narrow byway that led into Piccadilly with the Irishman's blessing warm at his heart. There was none in England to-day whose praise could move him as O'Grady's did.

He turned into St. James's Park. The effort of it all, the long training undergone with one purpose threading it, had grown suddenly a burden almost too heavy for his courage. By some frailty, common to most men, it is the last few yards of the race that make the goal seem furthest off. Dick Lambert was glad of the turf under his feet, of the trees brave in their spring livery, of God's blue sky and sunlight over all. He needed a resting space, and here he found a little corner that suggested, if it did no more, the breadth and peace-giving of the far-off north land that had bred his forefathers.

The peace was short-lived. A company of

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riders came galloping to meet him, and two of them glanced at him in passing and reined up their horses. One was the Prime Minister, the other was Miss Landale, her face softened and illumined by grief for the brother she had lost.

The Premier had many gifts, but not that of tact. Remembering Lambert's pursuit of Miss Landale years ago, his sudden withdrawal that had set the old wives' tongues gossiping, he might have spared his humour.

"We've not met, Mr. Lambert, since the day I nearly drove over you in Piccadilly, months ago. The ironies of life always appealed to me, and I laughed all the way down to Richmond. For a man who had survived Waterloo to be killed in crossing a street, you'll admit, would have had a queer irony of its own."

"Yes, for the lookers-on," said Lambert pleasantly.

"I was curious, and have been ever since, to know what you were thinking of that day you crossed the road as if it were a country lane. Who was the lady, Mr. Lambert?"

Without knowing it, Miss Landale's glance sought Dick Lambert's; but he was looking into space—across the green, sunlit park that was a counterfeit of the true country—and his face was hard and tranquil.

"To be exact, sir, I was thinking of a drunken reprobate, by name O'Grady, who teaches sword-craft."

"Eh? I'm growing a trifle deaf, Mr. Lambert, what with troubles in the House, and nursing our majority, and what not. And you say you were going to O'Grady? I thought you fought no duels."

"Not by habit, sir, but needs must when the devil drives."

Again Miss Landale sought his glance, and did not find it. And after they had ridden forward, she carried the knowledge, as women count knowledge, that her man had flouted her.

"Mr. Lambert grows duller with the years. He'll die a Quaker in spite of Waterloo," she said, with sudden weariness. She was very lonely these days, without a friend whose help she cared to ask.

"Lambert is a man, Quaker or Catholic, or what not," said the Premier, with an odd touch of gravity.

"As men judge him? Why, yes, you are all in league together!"

"As men judge him. Their verdict seldom errs. Perhaps women would be all the better, Miss Landale, for the same gift with women."

Through the forlornness of her life, the bitter recollection of the way her brother had died, Miss Landale's quick, natural temper found outlet. "There's a pestilence in our midst, as we all know—a low ruffler, who goes thrusting duels on men weaker with the sword, and none of our men will rid us of him."

The Premier flushed a little. All Miss Landale's world had given her sympathy, but of the men who had cared for her, not one had been hardy enough to challenge Nick Singleton before he offered marriage to the sister of Nick's victim.

"What would you have them to do?" he asked lamely. "There are three, perhaps, in England who could meet Singleton on equal terms. For the rest, it would be going out in the raw dawn to be murdered. No, no, Miss Landale, there is such a thing as common-sense."

"Yes. It grows thick, like all noxious weeds." Into her face there crept a light that was not of this world—a beautiful, keen radiance, as if she looked beyond the narrow prison men call life. "What would I have one man among them do? Why, to go straight against the pestilence and fight it! If he died, he—he would die crowned—oh, crowned, and needing no man's pity!"

The Premier shook himself free of the spell that Miss Landale's sincerity was casting round him. There was to be a wearing debate in the House later on, and he needed all his hold on common-sense.

"Forgive me," he said quietly, "but the heroic ages are long past. Life is a dull affair to-day, Miss Landale. We rear no Davids to go up against Goliath."

Dick Lambert, meanwhile, was pacing up and down the grass, and at last decision came to him. He no longer feared these last yards that lay between himself and the goal ahead. Eye, and nerve, and strength were at their best; the machine known as the body of him was in fine working order. He must be getting about his business without delay.

He recrossed the park, turned right-handed down Piccadilly, and sought out Hamilton, the friend who had played second to young Landale's duel months ago. The two had seen little of each other lately, but their friendship was of the kind that does not need to bridge long silences.

"Do you know where Mr. Singleton is to be found?" he asked.

"As it happens, I do, you queer, surprising fool. He sups at Cremorne."

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"Then so do we."

Hamilton glanced at him sharply. "So that's the meaning of your visits to O'Grady? Dick, you're mad, I tell you! They say Nick Singleton is like one bewitched these days. He goes faster down the hill, and his sword plays as if the de'il himself were in the blade."

"I go to Cremorne, whoever comes with me," said Lambert, with a genial sort of stubbornness.

That night, as Lambert and his boon comrade reached Cremorne, the first voice they heard was Nick Singleton's. It was a voice not easily forgotten. Behind the smoothness of it there was the harshness of ill-breeding joined with cruelty. Some few women had been found to protest that Singleton had a pleasant voice, but no man had been known to say as much.

Dick Lambert crossed to Singleton's table in a desultory and careless way. "Mr. Singleton," he said, "do you remember a lad you murdered last December? His ghost is haunting me—on my honour, the lad haunts me!"

Singleton was himself, as always. "Best join him, then. At dawn, shall we say?"

"Precisely. You have the gift of intuition, sir. The gift is priceless."

There were only three who looked on at the next morning's duel—the two seconds and a surgeon who had some knowledge of the sword, and a keenness greater than his skill. And afterwards the three were agreed that only in dreams had they looked on at a match so vivid and engrossing.

Singleton tried every trick that he had at call, and twice touched Lambert—wounds that drew blood, but did not matter. And Dick Lambert waited, with a reserve of strength and subtlety combined, that wore down his adversary. As the hot fight went forward, Singleton had only his own skill to help him; the other had long training, with one single purpose at the far end of the journey, and he had, too, a soul on fire with that anger which burns keen and wholesome as the sun.

O'Grady had been right when he sent his man out to the battle, knowing his sword-play groomed to a nicety. There was no doubt now in Dick's mind that he could fail in this surprising adventure. He simply waited, and, when his chance came, he thrust with such nice precision that the surgeon admitted his skill had ceased to be of any service.

All that day, till nightfall, the joy of it went singing at Dick Lambert's heart. He had not killed a man—he had simply rooted out from the land a pestilence that was slaying many likely youngsters. Miss Landale's brother was avenged, too, and the knowledge brought its own peace across the taint of cowardice that had carried him to the Peninsular, to Waterloo, to a foolish glory he had not asked or needed.

When he got to his knees that night, however, his Quaker forbears had their will of him. He was spent with effort and long training, and a sudden midnight came about his soul, as if God had deserted him. He had killed a man to-day, and the deep waters rushed about his ears. And yet God, knowing all men's motives, understood; and that night Lambert slept like a little child, aware that he had ridden well through the muddled byways of this life. He had been a good physician, killing pestilence lest more men died.

The next day, at five of the afternoon, Miss Landale and her maid came to the house where he had chambers, and were told that Mr. Lambert was within.

She went in, bidding her maid wait in the passage. Lambert, as he advanced to meet her, was perplexed, it seemed. His old courtesy did not fail him, but behind it there was a question as to the reason of this unlooked-for visit. For a moment they stood facing each other without a word spoken. The traces of yesterday's adventure were apparent in his face—tiredness, resolution, the gravity that remembered the taking of a man's life. Miss Landale could not have understood the fine picture that he made if long trouble had not given her the eyes that see.

Then she gave him both hands with an impulsiveness she could not check. "My thanks, Mr. Lambert—oh, indeed, my thanks! It was not revenge I wanted—that frailty went long ago—but there were other sisters loving other brothers as I did mine; and the man who is dead—his appetite was growing for such duels."

"That is my one excuse for killing him," said Lambert quietly. "You hearten me, Miss Landale. The Quaker in one is long in dying."

There was a silence. She had expected more, perhaps, at the end of this meeting she had sought against all instincts of pride and reticence. But Lambert showed no hint of recollection that once he had cared greatly for her.

"My thanks, sir, and good day," she said at last. "I shall be always in your debt."

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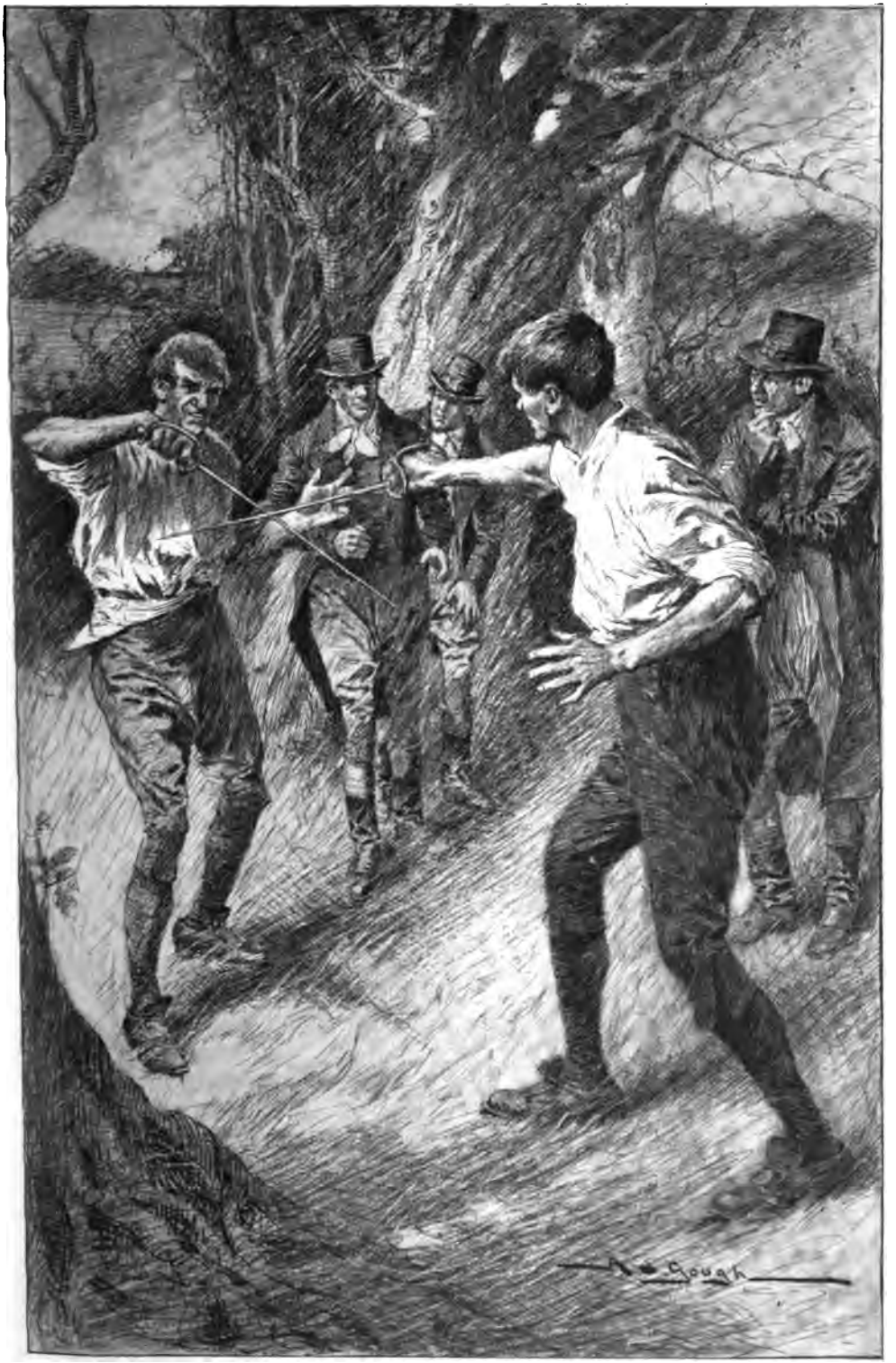

"As the hot fight went forward, Singleton had only his own skill to help him."

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"Yes," said Lambert, with sudden hardness, "you'll be always in my debt."

She could make nothing of him. There seemed a deep gulf set between his north-bred temper and her own.

"Do women never unsay anything?" he asked.

"Oh, very seldom. They talk so much, sir, and at random, that their whole lives would be spent in unsaying, once the habit fastened on them."

She was tired, and there were no stars in her sky; but Lambert checked her as she turned toward the door.

"Years ago you said a few words I've remembered ever since. They were not random words, and they sent me out to the Peninsular, where men were doing England's work."

Miss Landale was amazed. She had not forgotten the words—the shame of them had eaten into her concience long ago—but she was astonished that this man who had proved himself beyond dispute, this man whose name would be honoured even a little more since yesterday, had found it worth while to remember.

"I said that you feared to meet death in the red of the dawn," she said, standing at bay. "I did not—did not believe it then, and the world would laugh at me to-day if I dared say as much. Mr. Lambert, we're saying good-bye. Take a farewell from me for your journey. When women's tongues are smooth, distrust them, but when they are sharp, believe that they wish you very well."

Lambert did not know himself. Wayfaring folk never do, or there would be no complexities in life. He was aware only that the taunt which had taught him manhood was unsaid, aware that a great bitterness had left his soul.

"It was a long way round to home," he said. "My dear—oh, my dear, why didn't you tell me long ago?"

"I did my best, but we spoke different tongues."

There was neither rugged north now nor tender south about this muddled business of being alive. There were two people who had journeyed through the wilderness, and found a green place of waters on the further side.

HOPE.

WHEN fields were wan and woodlands bare,
And skies were darkling overhead,
And in the heart reigned chill despair,
Whence joy had vanished, peace had fled;
When sullen tempests shook the land,
And with the storm I scarce could cope,
There came and took me by the hand—
A little lad called Hope.

With fresh young gaze and buoyant mien,
He cheered me on my lonely way,
Then suddenly the fields were green,
And all the woodlands spoke of May;
A radiant sunshine swept the skies,
And touched with gold the upland slope,
Where dwelt my friend with happy eyes,
That little lad called Hope.

ARTHUR COMPTON-RICKETT.

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THE ST. LAWRENCE CRICKET GROUND, CANTERBURY.

Among the figures in the foreground are to be seen Lord Harris, Lord Nevill, Sir George Collard, Mr. F. Furley, and Mr. J. Pawley-Murrin.

THE CANTERBURY CRICKET WEEK.

BY SIR HOME GORDON, BART.

Photographs by H. B. Collis, Canterbury.

IT has long been a truism that the lines of Kent cricket fall into the pleasantest places. The executive have a way of arranging "weeks" for the home matches of their eleven which are altogether delightful. This means that there are extraneous attractions, as well as the cricket, to bring people to the towns, and that the local enthusiasm is capitally fostered. Nor does the play, as a rule, fall below the standard of the surroundings. Kent may not always have been top of the tree, though the hop county often is, but it is safe to say that no other shire has for so many summers better upheld the true sporting tradition of playing the game with spirit and to the uttermost.

It has been my occasional lot to watch a very moderate Kent eleven in the past, but I never once saw the side "chuck it" or play a poking, depressing game. Frequently I have witnessed struggling Kent elevens making plucky efforts to win. Sometimes —always of late years—I have watched absolutely excellent Kent sides showing glorious cricket, taking risks, and deserving their motto "Invicta" morally, even if they have not been invariably victorious. When we lament that this or that is wrong with the way in which first-class cricket is played, a triumphant exception has invariably to be made in the case of Kent.

The annual crown of Kentish cricket is, of course, the Canterbury Week, the best, the oldest, and most eagerly anticipated of all pleasant gatherings. Canterbury itself is a dear, delightful, drowsy old cathedral city, full of picturesqueness quite apart from the incomparable minster. But for its festival it yearly wakes up and becomes the most decorously gay town, enjoying a sporting carnival of a nature so innocent that the clergy can join in, and yet so cheery as to please the most *blasé*.

The curiously enviable atmosphere of the Canterbury Week is a little difficult to communicate in print to those who have never come under its influence. Cricket is pre-eminent, yet some there are who can hardly tell the difference between a bat and a ball who yet look on Canterbury Week as the bright spot of the year. So far as the sport is concerned, perhaps the charm lies in the fact that on the St. Lawrence Ground—indeed, on all Kent grounds, for the matter of that—

one still finds that cricket is only a game and not a business. Would it were so everywhere! Also at Canterbury the old is so skilfully blended with the new. There is every modern comfort for cricketer and spectator, yet the tents round the ground, the flags, the annual commemoration of I Zingari all give a delicious flavour. There are a hundred small touches that bring the past prominently into the present in a way as gratifying to the mental epicure as it is soothing to those who elsewhere seem to hear more about "gate money" and squabbles than about the sport of the most sporting

organised by the Old Stagers, in Sir Arthur Sullivan's "Cox and Box" appeared the three oldest members of the company—Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, General de Bath, and Mr. Quintin Twiss.

Now, let me tell the younger generation what many do not know—namely, that it has been quite by chance that Kent cricket has become so completely associated with the Canterbury Week, for the festival had been that of I Zingari. That famous wandering club came into existence in 1845, and was at the outset practically the group which had been acting as cheery Canterbury Pilgrims

STREET DECORATIONS FOR THE FESTIVAL.

of games. Yes, they understand cricket properly in Kent.

In 1891 was held the jubilee meeting of the Canterbury Week, which was first held in 1842. The commemoration was ruined, from the cricketing point of view, because the rain washed out the match with Gloucestershire, and caused the result of the fixture with Surrey to be decided by the spin of the coin. But at the banquet there came an interesting speech from Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, who had been associated with the Week all through the fifty years, and who, in 1912, will, no doubt, renew his almost septuagenarian interest in the function of which he is the beloved *doyen*. At the theatricals in the previous years. It was they who exercised such gallant hospitality in the county town, and for decades the matches were Kent *v.* All England, and Gentlemen of England *v.* Gentlemen of Kent. Then the interest in these disproportionate matches began to fall off, and, with the substitution of a couple of county matches, the festival arose like a phœnix. Indeed, it is the subtle way in which new is grafted on old which has effected this genuine success—one that shows not the least symptom of deteriorating.

Of course, no one will say that to-day the I Zingari Club occupies the position in our workaday cricket that it did in the less serious

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A. P. Day. C. V. Hooman. K. L. Hutchings. D. W. Carr.

F. Marchant. E. W. Dillon. Mr. G. Marsham, J.P. (host). Rev. T. Rashleigh. J. R. Mason.

KENT GENTLEMEN, PAST AND PRESENT.

W. Hearne (scorer). A. Fielder. K. L. Hutchings. F. H. Huish. C. Blythe.

R. N. R Blaker. J. R. Mason. C. H. B. Marsham. E. W. Dillon. C. J. Burnup.
J. Seymour. E. Humphreys.

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THE WINNING TEAM OF THE FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP FOR KENT, 1906.

'sixties and 'seventies. But at Canterbury, the wandering club, which has no home, and the members of which pay no subscription, is still socially to the fore, though not more so than the proverbial Kentish hospitality. The two balls are unique, because, as Colonel Newnham-Davis aptly wrote, "the ladies do not give the only moving touches of colour to the scene, for the men who belong to the Band of Brothers wear their dark blue coats with the gilt buttons, and their broad ribbons of light blue and black, and the Old Stagers are equally gay with the I. Z. colours. All through the small hours the light and the music stream

THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS: THOMAS STOTHARD'S WELL-KNOWN PICTURE WITH THE FACES OF THE MODERN "OLD STAGERS" SUBSTITUTED FOR THE ARTIST'S ORIGINALS.

out into the silent night through open doors and windows, and the dawn has come, and the sky is silver and rose in the east before the last of the dancers is tired."

Cricket, however, claims chief attention here, and the earliest match to which I can personally refer is the one in 1882, when the Australians first visited Canterbury. On the opening morning, Mr. Massie led off with a 54, which included ten fours, and after that the Colonials made runs in the dogged way that used to characterise the later men when the first wickets had fallen cheaply. Next day came a beautiful Kentish century from Mr. E. F. S. Tylecote, a capital bat, who subsequently kept wicket for England. The present Bishop of Milanesia, then Mr. Cecil Wilson, twice exceeded the half century. He was, perhaps, the best modern bat who failed to get into the Cambridge eleven.

Next year, for the last time, the late R. A. H. Mitchell played on the St. Lawrence Ground. "Mike" will be only a memory to generations of Old Etonians, but he can have had few superiors as a bat. It is sad that of that M.C.C. eleven not only he, but Messrs. Herbert Whitfield and C. E. Cottrell, as well as Barnes and Sherwin, have all passed to the bourne whence no traveller returns. That week against Kent, Mr. C. T. Studd, who subsequently became a missionary in China, claimed 18 wickets and scored 18 and 105 not out. In 1884, at Lord's, the next time he met Kent he compiled 141 not out, thus giving a poor club side an easy victory when put in to make 270.

That season, at Canterbury, Kent obtained a glorious victory over the Australians, due to the invaluable work rendered by every member of the side, not a thing often noticeable, for someone almost invariably fails to come off. In the following festivals, Louis Hall, the imperturbable, proceeded to give a series of his unique exhibitions of over-defensive cricket. In 1885 he was 165 minutes at the wicket for 12 not out; next season he scored 74 not out and 75 not out, going clean through the innings,

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and in 1887 he amassed 110 out of a total of 559, when all ten Kent fieldsmen were put on to bowl.

In 1886, Wootton bowled out the Australians, giving Kent a ten wickets victory. He was slow left-handed, and often difficult, but his arm was not so high as that of Blythe. In the 1887 meeting against Yorkshire and Middlesex, the aggregate was 1982 runs for 57 wickets, neither match ever having any likelihood of finishing. There were five centuries and a 99 from that great batsman, Mr. W. H. Patterson.

In 1890 I have a vivid recollection of the festival, for I then witnessed the finest

James Lowther. Alan Mackinnon. Irene Vanbruzh. Nigel Playfair. G. Trollope. C. Colnaghi. Hon. Sir E. Chandos Leigh. Lt.-Col. Newnham-Davis.

Harold Whitaker. J. L. Baldwin.

THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS: THOMAS STOTHARD'S WELL-KNOWN PICTURE WITH THE FACES OF THE MODERN "OLD STAGERS" SUBSTITUTED FOR THE ARTIST'S ORIGINALS.

century I ever saw compiled by a soldier. The year before, at Portsmouth, on the famous Recreation Ground, which was laid by careful labour on slate, I had seen Mr. L. A. Hamilton scoring prodigiously, and on this occasion his beautiful innings was the more remarkable because there were only two other double-figure contributions on the side, and he had never met Messrs. Turner and Ferris, who were at their best. It was really a beastly wicket, and no Australian obtained thirty. Not until 1893 was I again at the festival, and once more I saw the Colonial colours lowered by the men of Kent. This time it was due to poor Australian batting. The visitors needed only 97 to win, but Walter Wright and Alec Hearne sent the whole side back for 60, the bowlers being supported by admirable fielding. The joy at Canterbury was to see Mr. J. R. Mason for the first time. His scores were 14, 18, 49, and 50. Let it be said once and for all he is incomparably the greatest cricketer of our time who has not played for England in England, and he is as popular personally as he is admirable in every department of the game. In a side chosen for the best—best both individually and for skill—he would be among the foremost. In 1896 he and the Rev. W. Rashleigh, a fine free bat, each had a century against Lancashire, to which the renowned Mr. Archie MacLaren responded with 226 not out. Nor was this all, for next year the old Harrovian surpassed this with 244, and to round off his Canterbury achievements, reference must be made to the accident that in 1906 he hit a ball which alighted on the forehead of an elderly spectator, who had to be removed to the hospital.

I suppose the pluckiest hitter for his inches I ever saw was Mr. Henery, though Mr. S. E. Gregory runs him hard. But no bat of his inches ever so completely discounted shortness by ability as Mr. C. J. Burnup, and "Pinkie's" century against the Australians they considered the best performance they encountered that tour. There was one feature of 1897 which must be recorded. Mr. W. M. Bradley was a fast bowler who,

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Col. Geo. E. H. Nugent. Whitmore. C. W. A. Trollope. L. Benson. Augustus Spalding. Quintin Twiss. Rev. C. James Randolph. Lowther (The Speaker). N. Cooper. W. F. Fladgate. Arthur Bourchier.

W. P. Miles. Capt. Gooch. J. L. Baldwin. Sir S. Ponsonby-Fane. Hon. Sir E. Chandos Leigh.
S. Ponsonby. C. Drummond. Alan Mackinnon. Capt. Eccles. C. Ponsonby. C. Colnaghi. Eustace Ponsonby.

A GROUP OF "OLD STAGERS."

as a bat, rarely showed any confidence in his own run-getting propensities. Yet against Yorkshire, after Kent had lost nine wickets for 75, he proceeded to knock the bowling all over the field to the tune of 67 off his own bat. Compared to this, Fielder's last wicket record pales, because Fielder, if not quite a Rhodes with the bat, has great possibilities as a run-getter. Lord Hawke was so amazed that he actually never changed the bowling save for two overs.

Quintin Twiss. Charles Drummond. Augustus Spalding. Lt.-Col. Newnham-Davis. Hon. Sir E. Chandos Leigh.

Miss Victoria Addison. C. Colnaghi. J. L. Baldwin. Miss Carlotta Addison. Miss Lizzie Henderson.

ANOTHER "OLD STAGERS" GROUP.

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Paul Rubens. Mrs. Harold Whitaker. Charles Drummond. Miss Enid Spencer Brunton. Percy Lee. C. W. A. Trollope. W. Leese. Miss Victoria Addison. Miss Muriel Ashwin. Nigel Playfair.

"OLD STAGERS" IN "MY FRIEND THE PRINCE."

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W. Hearne (scorer). W. J. Fairservice. E. Humphreys. F. E. Woolley. C. Blythe. A. Fielder.

D. W. Carr. J. R. Mason. H. T. W. Hardinge. E. W. Dillon. K. L. Hutchings. J. Seymour. F. H. Huish.

THE KENT ELEVEN OF 1911-1912.

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An astonishing thing happened in 1902. Mr. Mason and Blythe caught Surrey in one of those collapsing moods to which the metropolitan side seems to be occasionally liable throughout its history. Following on after 55 runs had been put up for one wicket, the other nine were obtained for only four more runs, an episode parallel to the one at Lord's when Pougher took six Australian wickets for no runs. That year (1902) the Australians came to Canterbury three weeks after the festival, and as Mr. Cloudesley Marsham enjoyed two yet more rapid partnerships, for, with Huish, he added 74 in half an hour, and with Blythe 111 in five minutes longer. Prodigious! On the ladies' day, against Lancashire, Kent made 479 for only three wickets, Messrs. Hutchings and Mason adding 201 runs in 110 minutes. Both matches were won by an innings with over 130 runs to spare on each occasion, a record for this or any other festival.

In concluding this appreciation of one of

THE "OLD STAGERS" IN "THE NOBLE LORD."

Mr. Trumble took eight wickets for 30 runs, they were easily victorious.

Whenever we grumblers are inveighing against slow cricket, we are able to observe that, as a rule, Kent does not indulge in procrastinating methods. By way of proving this, and as an instance of refreshing vigour with the bat, let the match against Sussex in 1906 be recalled. This was the annus mirabilis of the Men of the White Horse, and they began the Canterbury Week by scoring 568 against Sussex. Mr. Burnup led off with 141 in four hours, but the last 232 runs were made in ninety minutes. Mr. Blaker scored 122 in two hours, but the best functions still spared to cricket-lovers in the twentieth century, far be it from me to say the old times were best. On the contrary, I believe there are Masons, Christophersons, and Marchants as yet at school who will emulate the best deeds thus far witnessed. Still, I fancy the lines on which cricket will develop are going to diverge considerably from those of the past. The traditions of the Canterbury Week uniquely blend past and present into a singularly delightful unison; and if one thing ought to withstand the changes of fashion, it is this, because it has been so wisely modified to suit the fresh generations without

losing the character beloved by their elders. Therefore, particularly in the Minster City, are the words written by James Love in 1744 still apt—

> Hail, cricket, glorious, manly British game!
> First of all sports, be first alike in fame!

To the Old Stagers at Canterbury, a whole volume of an entertaining nature could be devoted. Sprung from the same stock as the I Zingari, as indissolubly connected with the Canterbury Week, and as ancient of days, is the Company of Old Stagers. For more than sixty years Sir Spencer Ponsonby-Fane, their President, sat at the long table in the club-room at the Fountain Hotel, at the annual dinner, until last year, in his enforced absence, his place was taken by Lord Harris, without mention of whose name no chronicle of Kentish doings could be complete. And many have been the celebrities in this walk of life or that who have sat at the board and taken their parts in the quaint old theatre, since the days when that *beau sabreur* Sir Henry de Bathe would drive his fellow-mummers down with coach-and-four, before the railway or the motor-car brought visitors to Canterbury.

Players as distinguished as the late Hermann Vezin and Arthur Cecil took part in the performances, and, more recently, Arthur Bourchier and Nigel Playfair have contributed to the gaiety of the audiences. Nor should it be forgotten that the devout Father Adderley once sung an Old English ballad in French. Sir Charles Wyndham has even played a thinking part. From the ranks of authors and composers have come Tom Taylor, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Sir William Gilbert, Leo Trevor, Colonel Newnham-Davis, and Paul Rubens, to mention but a few. The present Speaker of the House of Commons has spoken his lines.

In times past, the troupe would be disguised with fearsome nomenclature, as "the McUsquebaugh," "the Macfingan," "Kensington Gore," "Acton Deed," and the rest, but now the well-known amateurs appear with their own familiar names, and no longer do "the numerous Smith family, in their native costumes," figure upon the programme. At some time or another many of the leading actresses of their day have come to the Old Stagers' aid. Amongst these may be mentioned Miss Lena Ashwell, Miss Sybil Carlisle, Miss Fortescue, Miss Irene Vanbrugh, Miss Fanny Brough, Miss Carlotta Addison, Miss Eva Moore, Miss May Martyn, Miss Annie Hughes, Miss Kate Rorke, and the late Miss Rose Norreys. In recent years some well-known amateur ladies, among them the Countess of Lathom, Mrs. Charles Crutchley, Lady Susan Fitzclarence, and Mrs. Harold Whitaker, have been called into the cast. Two plays, sometimes "new and original," sometimes borrowed from the London boards, are given a couple of performances each, but the special feature of the theatricals is reserved for the last evening, and takes the form of an epilogue. This, the work, in successive generations, of Tom Taylor, William Yardley, Colonel Newnham-Davis, and Paul Rubens, among others, is in the nature of a *revue* of things in general, and the events of the week in particular, and the secret of its contents is religiously preserved until its production—on some occasions until even afterwards, if the prompter should have been looking after the "props," or trying to learn up his own numerous parts. But that was in times past. Now the rehearsals are very strenuous. For many an hour during the Week do the Stagers shun the delights of dalliance on the Ground, and live laborious days, turning themselves into a musical comedy company, in which each man and every woman plays many parts, and has to change his or her clothes, on an average, every two minutes. No matter where the rest of the action may have taken place—the White City, the South Pole, Noah's Ark—the closing scene is always the St. Lawrence Cricket Ground, where the matches of the week are burlesqued. Thither tradition brings first the Spirit of Kent, in the person of Lady Harris, Lady Darnley, Lady Guilford, or some other hostess of the festival, shyly accompanied by the county amateurs, to declaim her lines "in praise of Kent," and to introduce a Huish or a Woolley, or some other benefited hero of the hour. Next comes the Spirit of the I Zingari, represented by some lady whose name is a cricket household word, followed by the visiting eleven, to speak a verse in honour of the game; and finally the Spirit of the Old Stagers appears, portrayed by their leading lady, to voice the parting message, and to send the packed audience to wander out into the lit and garlanded street, with its faint, persistent smell of tanyard—which one has actually begun to like—and to reach at last the ballroom, there to chat of the crowded pleasures of the week—the cricket, the plays, the parties of the ever-hospitable Buffs, the gossip of the tents, the meeting of old friends and the making of new, and finally to say "Good-bye."

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THE BOOK OF THE ASS.

By OWEN OLIVER.

I.—From His Book.

I HAVE gleaned an ear from the field of wisdom to-night.

Old Ditmas let it fall from his sheaf. A party of mixed sexes had gathered in front of the wind-screen, facing a full sea and the Southern Cross. He was telling stories with a wholesome laugh in them.

"How do you collect them?" someone asked in the lull after a laugh.

"I note them at the end of my diary," he confessed.

There was a chorus of incredulous raillery at the idea of such a notoriously wise man keeping a diary, and Mrs. Royd remarked that she had always understood that it was a feminine weakness.

"It is a weakness when it is feminine," he retorted.

"Go on," she encouraged him. "'I remember a story about a diary——'"

"I decline to jest about my diary," he stated. "It is the rudder that steers me."

"That sounds like a jest," Carruthers commented.

"Or a riddle," Alice Benson suggested. "Why is a diary like a rudder? We give it up, Mr. Ditmas."

He laughed and finished his whisky and soda.

"When it is kept as I keep mine," he explained. "You see, ordinary diary-keepers put down the things that they like to remember. I put down those that I don't."

"It must be a painful document," I observed.

"But useful," he claimed. "When you read that, two days running, you lost your temper at bridge, or sat up late boring people with your stories, you give up bridge and go early to bed. Good night!"

He rolled off, amid a chorus of protest, cracking his fingers and swaying his huge body. He turned to us before passing the screen.

"I call it 'The Book of the Ass'!" he stated. "Try one, some of you. The chief steward has a lot of nice little note-books with black shiny covers."

I was carrying Miss Benson's rugs downstairs for her, and we encountered the chief steward.

"Now you can buy your book," she suggested, with that queer little tilt of the head which first made me notice her.

I bought two of his note-books, and presented her with one.

"You might have a folly to record," I remarked.

"But I don't understand why you bought two," she rejoined. "You, of course, have no follies to put down."

If I haven't before the end of the voyage, it won't be your fault, Miss Alice!

My asininity of the moment is flirtation with Alice Benson, a pretty, pert, penniless governess, on the look-out for a good match. Well, I've come within hailing distance of forty, and I think I can risk it. One must do something on board ship, and she is good company.

II.—From Her Book.

This is the Book of the Ass—me—Alice Benson.

I propose to enter herein my follies—as many as I find time to write about.

My folly of the moment is attempting to be wise—matrimonially wise. I am not sure that my folly is not wisdom. Let me put the case to you, book.

Suppose that a girl is three-and-twenty, passably good-looking, reasonably intelligent, and horribly poor, a governess to brats—little wretches!

Suppose that she is sick to death of being a dependent, even though her present employers make dependence tolerable.

Suppose that she sees no way out of it except marriage.

Suppose that she doesn't want to marry anyone in particular.

Suppose that there is a well-to-do and clever lawyer, getting on toward forty, not bad-looking, very self-sure and superior.

Suppose that he has deliberately set out to flirt with her, without any "intentions," that he isn't in love with her, but merely likes light brown hair and big eyes and a pinky complexion and a tart tongue.

Suppose he felt quite safe in his wisdom.

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Suppose she thought she'd show him that he wasn't.

Suppose in an unguarded moment he should propose.

Suppose she should say "Yes"—or "No."

Would she be an ass?

In plain English, shall I lay myself out to catch a rich husband, or shan't I?

You horrid book!

III.—From His Book.

A RUDDER is no use unless you hold the tiller. At present I am leaving it free.

Why shouldn't I? I am not falling in love with the merry Alice, and she is not falling in love with me.

One doesn't fall in love very easily at eight-and-thirty, and one doesn't fall in love very easily *with* eight-and-thirty. If I saw a risk of either, I'd get off at the next port. She is a delightful 'board-ship comrade, but she wouldn't do for a companion on the long journey. Too young, too frivolous, too fond of pleasure. Not enough heart, I think; anyhow, no heart for me. Doubtless she pronounces me too old, too sensible, too fond of work. Probably she considers it a merit that I haven't enough heart to bore her. Possibly she would endure the drawbacks for the sake of my money. Certainly she wouldn't be surprised if I made her the offer. It is a deliberate flirtation on both sides, so neither can complain.

The difference is that I am flirting for amusement and she for business. No doubt she enjoys the sport, too. Well, catch me if you can, my pretty fisherwoman.

I take warning, however, from the Book of the Ass. Angling is a risky sport for the fish!

IV.—From Her Book.

WILL he, or won't he? Shall I, or shan't I?

It would be the sensible thing to marry him, if I have the chance; and somehow I fancy that I shall. I can't go on governessing all my life, and the poor old mother can't go on with the little I send her; and that's every penny I can spare.

I don't care for anybody else, and it would be such fun to catch him. He nibbles at the hook, and thinks himself so safe! I *must* make him propose. But when he does——

What's the use of equivocating to a diary? I'll set down in the Book of the Ass

> What I would not tell
> For hope of Heaven or fear of hell!

I mean to accept him. If I can't put up with him, I can easily break it off.

I don't know that I *could* put up with him. He is so superior. That is the word for him. If we get married, we shall live cat and dog.

If he weren't so sure about everything. I could like him just tolerably, and then I shouldn't hesitate. I could easily make him like me, and it would be a fair bargain. I should get his money, and he would get a nice wife. I can be nice, wretch as I am.

What I don't like—besides his "superiority"—is catching him when he doesn't even want to be caught. I don't see that I need mind that. He is fifteen years older, and he deliberately set out to flirt with me. I shall catch him if I can. Won't he be surprised, poor man!

Do you know, book, I am not quite so horrid as you'd think from what I've written down. If the right man came along, I'd marry him, and be poor with him, and starve with him—somebody who wasn't "superior." I wouldn't care what he was, so long as he wasn't that!

V.—From His Book.

I MUST begin to grip the tiller. I detected a distinct feeling of regard for her to-day. She was such a little brick.

It was rough, and most of the people were knocked over. Alice's "tiresome brats," as she calls them, were very queer. Their mother and nurse stayed below. So both the youngsters dumped on poor Alice, who was lying in a deck-chair and looking a trifle greenish. She tried to bear up, and petted the poor little beggars, till I went and took the boy away from her. She managed a smile.

"Good Samaritan!" she said. Then she hugged the little girl to her, and they both went to sleep.

Her hair had fallen out, and she looked almost childish. I am fifteen years the older, and if the flirtation went to the point of her really liking me—— No, it would not do even then; we should be extremely ill-matched.

As a matter of fact, she doesn't care for me. She might try to persuade herself that she did; but it would be my money. Still, you're a nicer woman than I thought, naughty Miss Alice.

VI.—From Her Book.

THE superior person was really nice to-day. My dear, tiresome brats were very sick. I

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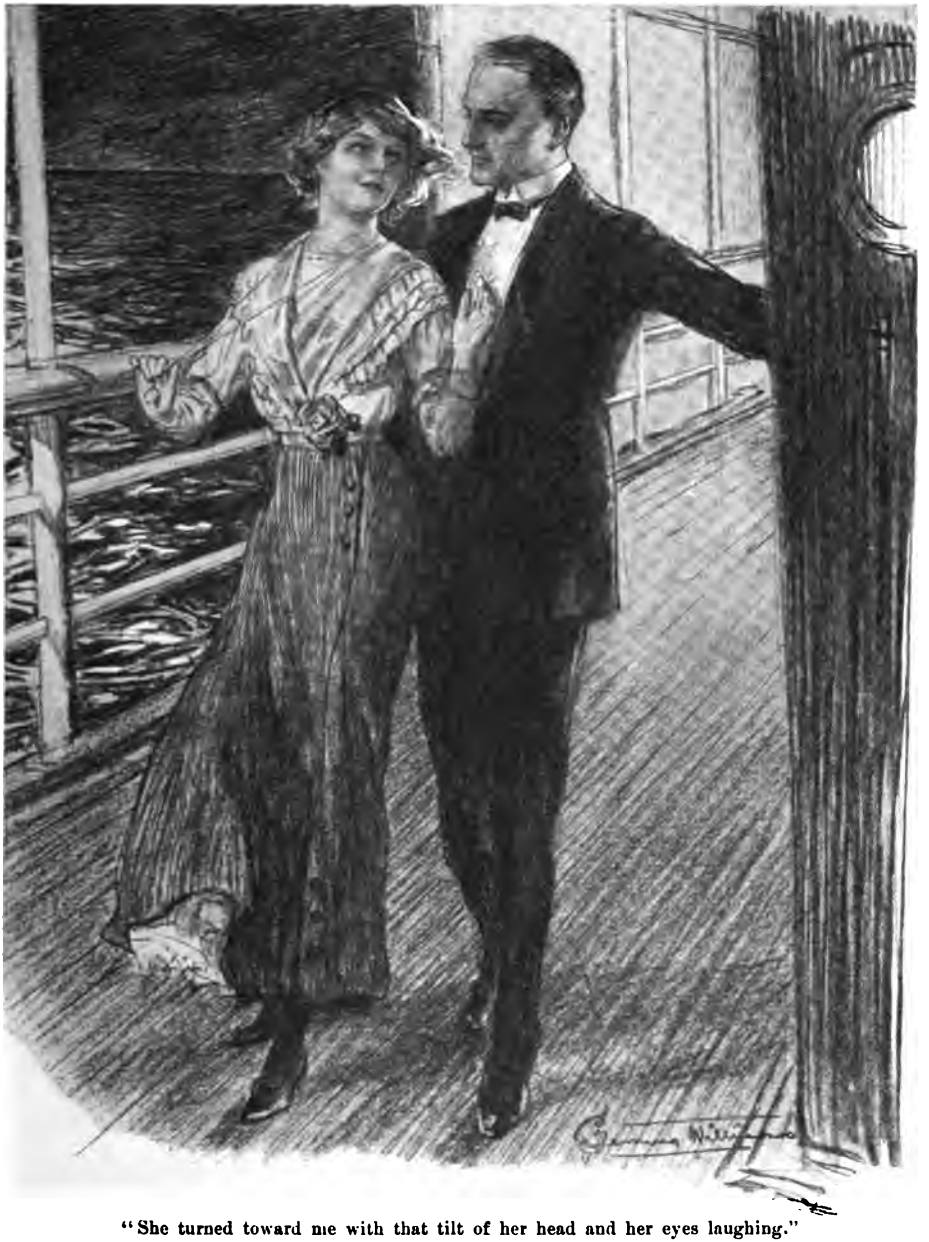
think I should have been if he hadn't hauled Desmond off me, and nursed him himself. I was so done up that I went off to sleep cuddling Gracie. When I woke, Desmond was asleep. The hardened man was reading a law book and smoking an enormous cigar. He is superior to sea-sickness.

He got up and carried the youngsters down to their berths without waking them. Then he came back and tucked me up, and put another rug over me, and sat and talked.

"Do you know what I have been thinking?" he asked.



"She turned toward me with that tilt of her head and her eyes laughing."

"That I looked green and ugly?" I suggested.

He laughed.

"If I thought it would cure your vanity, I'd say 'Yes,'" he told me. "But, as a

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matter of fact, you only look green. I have been thinking that you are very fond of your 'tiresome brats,' as you call them."

"You evidently thought very badly of me before," I told him.

I thought that would have fetched a compliment; but he only stared, as if he were trying to realise what he did think of me. I fancy he also began to realise that I am dangerous. I might have been; but while he was staring, I went off to sleep again. I must have looked a fright. My hair had fallen out. I wish *I* were too superior to mind the ship waggling about.

If it keeps fine, like it is this evening, I shall put on my pink blouse to-morrow. I meant to keep it in reserve, but something must be done to wipe out the memory of my awful looks of to-day.

VII.—From His Book.

Old Ditmas was right. A man needs a frank record of his follies to warn him. I felt the fascination of the fair Alice to-day. She wore a wonderful pale pink blouse and a wonderful pale pink smile. She certainly is a very pretty woman.

"I want people to forget how horrid I looked yesterday," she told me. "Please stare at me! As if you were taking a photograph to blot out yesterday's green one!"

She posed with her head a-tilt—the lure that first interested me in her. I did look hard at her, so hard that Mrs. Luttrell smiled.

"I think I could guess the photo of yesterday," she said in her gentle way—she is a very delicate woman. "It isn't a green one, is it? It's a pale, heroic little person struggling to bear with two sick babies?"

"It is that," I assented; and Mrs. Luttrell nodded.

"That is the real Alice—well, one of them! The other is this vain little person."

She put her hand on Alice's arm for a moment. She is distinctly fond of her, so are the children. The other day I told Desmond that his Miss Benson was naughty. He glared at me. "You's a 'tory-teller," he said. "An' that's rude! An' I mean to be rude!"

If the green Alice and the pink Alice were all of her! But there's a black Alice who is looking for a well-to-do husband. Perhaps there's a white Alice for somebody. Not for me. The next time I feel a trace of susceptibility I take warning, and the flirtation stops. Note that, Book of the Ass.

VIII.—From Her Book.

The superior man sees the bait at last.

Ah, my friend, you've nibbled! The fisherwoman will have you. I had a letter this morning when we were in port. Mummy isn't well, Mrs. Nugent says, and she ought to go away for a change. Where's the money to come from?

I am sorry for you, poor superior man, but it's your own fault. You most deliberately set out to flirt with me. Now you mean to stop. I saw it in your eyes. You shan't stop!

IX.—From His Book.

Ass!

Ass!

I've proposed to her. Heaven forgive me, if I misjudge her, but I believe she deliberately lured me on!

I hadn't the remotest intention of doing it—quite the reverse, in fact. I was walking round with her after dinner. We were passing the wind-screen, and the ship rolled heavily just as we went from the electric lights into the starlight. I caught hold of her as we staggered. Her hair blew against my face. She turned toward me with that tilt of the head and her eyes laughing. . . . The pink blouse seemed to set her off like the velvet back of a jewel case. . . . She's pretty. . . . I didn't know I was going to kiss her till I'd done it.

She gave a queer little cry. I think that was genuine. The kiss had to be a proposal or an insult. I proposed, of course.

She said "Yes."

"I don't think you meant to," she told me the moment after, and then she began to cry. I fancied for a moment that she really liked me, and for the moment I was completely under the spell of her prettiness. I repeated the proposal—irretrievably.

She won't make a bad wife, I think. She's very, very pretty, and, if she chooses, she can be very nice, but—*she lured me on to it!*

Ass!

X.—From Her Book.

I've done it, and I hope I'm ashamed of myself.

I'll set down the bare, horrid fact. I tempted him to kiss me, and he did.

He took the consequences like a man, and proposed to me. I accepted him.

I'm sure he was sorry, and I'm sure that I am.

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Hair, eyes, and a saucy tongue—a pretty pink blouse to help! They've fetched—a "superior" slave-owner!

It serves him right! It *does* serve him right. I don't pity him. I pity myself.

It isn't just selling myself. It's selling myself to a man who doesn't want me. That is the humiliation.

I'd tell him the truth and set him free if it wasn't for mother. I must have money for her.

If he is nice about helping her when we are married, I will be nice to him. Perhaps he will like me then. I could like him very well if he liked me, and if he wouldn't be superior.

Isn't it clever of me to catch such a clever and superior husband?

The ass who was wise!

XI.—From His Book.

She has told Mrs. Luttrell, and Mrs. Luttrell has told half the ship. My arm aches with handshaking.

The curious thing is that everyone seems to think it a very suitable match. Even old Ditmas evidently thought so, though he pretended to chaff me.

"You should have kept a diary!" he declared.

Confound his diary!

It isn't that I don't like the girl. If she liked me, and were marrying me for myself, candidly I believe I should be rather glad. But I can't get rid of the conviction that she is marrying me for my money, and laid herself out to do it. She is obviously not easy in her mind. She tries so laboriously to be nice to me.

Mrs. Luttrell minded the children all the afternoon to give the "lovers" a chance. Gracie escaped and ran to Alice. She picked the child up and hugged her frantically. It was as if she said: "Here's someone I do love."

XII.—From Her Book.

To-day has been unbearable.

Everyone has been congratulating me. "He is such a clever man," they say. Why don't they say "superior"?

I won't call him that any more. He has been painfully anxious to be kind to me. He braces himself up and calls me "dear." Three times this evening he braced himself up and kissed me. The last time he told me to kiss him. The slave obeyed.

If he wanted me, I shouldn't mind so much. I should try hard to care for him, and I expect I should succeed. I really do think quite well of him, and I know that, even though he doesn't care for me, he means to be good to me.

If only——

Oh, book, I don't want to write. I want to cry!

Poor slave-girl! Slave-girl who sold herself!

XIII.—From His Book.

The storm has come. I must take the tiller now, and steer for poor, pretty Alice as well as for myself.

I had my diary on deck. Alice had hers. They are two identical little black-covered books. They got mixed up when I carried our things downstairs last night.

I opened the one that I had taken, to record that I had spent a more pleasant day—unsentimental but friendly—and perhaps I should have added that, when I kissed her good night, she kissed me unasked.

I read "The Book of the Ass—me—Alice Benson." Then I closed it, of course.

I handed it back to her this morning, and told her that I had read no more than that.

She looked at me and shivered.

"I have read every word of yours," she said. "Any woman would."

"Yes," I admitted. "Yes, I am more sorry than I can say. If I had had it last night, there would have been something more pleasant added."

She drew a deep breath.

"I tried to be nice yesterday," she said; "but—your book was very—very hurting. It was true what you thought. Our engagement is ended, obviously, but I would rather part friends. Read my book, and be kind and manly about it. You *are* that. I don't ask you to read the nasty things I have written just from spitefulness. It seems fair. You will find that you need not offer any self-sacrifice. I see"—she smiled faintly—"I see that you are contemplating that—I shall tell Mrs. Luttrell that our engagement is at an end."

"I will read the book, Alice," I said. "I think a clear understanding is best. As for the engagement—— There are only two more days of the voyage. We need not have the unpleasantness of announcing a breach on the ship, I think, if you will endure two more days of my society. I shall be considerate."

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"Thank you," she said. "You are always that."

I've had a bad quarter of an hour with her book. It has made me feel very sorry for the hurt that mine must have inflicted on her. It has also brought home to me that I am very responsible in the matter, and that, having read two Books of Asses, I have two tillers in my hand and two lives to steer. Two courses or one course?

We shall see to-night.

XIV.—From Her Book.

This is the last entry in you, Book of the Ass. To-morrow you drop overboard. I have read his diary, and he has read you. Drowning is our sentence on both of you.

"We will assume," he said, "that there is a nice woman and a tolerable man beneath the naughtiness and the superiority. Let us make up our minds to find them."

He was very, very nice. He gave you back to me after dinner, when we had walked up beyond the wind-screen, and said just that.

I said, "Thank you. Yes, we will try."

We stood looking over at the water for some time. Then he touched my blouse.

It was the pink one.

"The cause of my undoing," he said. "You looked so pretty."

"Don't!" I begged. I was crying.

"You look so pretty now," he said. "Don't you think—don't you think I have found the little white Alice? I love you, little girl! Can't you love me too?"

I turned to him and put my hands on his shoulders, and looked right up in his eyes.

"We have tried deceiving each other," I said. "Let us try being honest and true. I shall forget what you said just now; but if you ever say it again, I shall believe you. Do not say it again unless it ever becomes quite, quite true—unless you haven't a shadow of a doubt. I trust to your honour."

"On my honour, Alice," he said at once. "I love you very much, and I wish to marry you."

"I love you too!" I cried. "Oh, I *do!*"

It is true.

Now, little book, you must go. You are not mine any more, because I am not the girl who wrote in you. He has found the other Alice—the little white Alice who wants to be his wife.

Good-bye, Book of the Ass!

COWSLIPS AND DAISIES.

THE fairies they dance to the twink av the stars,
Where the sod is so green be the ould Ha'nted Bramble;
But they weary full soon av the gay rigadoon,
So they settle them down for a bit av a gamble.

On a heather-bell cushion the Queen she does sit,
An' the King's arrum-chair is an overset tabor;
An' for carrds clean an' new, shamrocks washed in the dew
Are best for their game, which is beggar-me-neighbour.

So, laughin' an' losin' an' winnin', they play
(It's yon wee fella Puck has the best av the luck, O!)
Till a frosty wind blows, an' the Red Bantam crows:
"Here's the polis, an' owld Sergeant Mornin', the bucko!"

Down go tables an' chairs—wirrasthru!—an' they're off,
For the lanthorn av Law on their sinnin' ablaze is,
L'avin' silver an' gowld on the grass where they've rowl'd—
An' that's the true rayson av cowslips an' daisies!

W. A. MACKENZIE.

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THE WIGMORES' EXPERIENCE.

By R. K. RISK.

TOWARDS the end of the year, on a Saturday late in November or early in December, I came up from Bedford to London to dine and spend the week-end with Clement Wigmore, barrister-at-law and journalist, an old school-friend with whom I had kept in touch during the ten years that had passed since his call to the Bar. In the earlier part of that decade, Wigmore had been involved in the process popularly described as "drifting into journalism." It was now about four years since the drift had ceased, and he had come to an anchorage on the staff of a morning paper, where he was now engaged in preaching Tariff Reform four nights a week, on the average, with occasional excursions into foreign politics by way of relief. Mr. Chamberlain's campaign had opened about two months earlier, and a letter I had received from Wigmore a week before I visited him mentioned that his journal was almost the only London daily which had not been constrained to call in an "expert" to deal with Tariff Reform in its leading columns. Wigmore mentioned this fact with modest satisfaction, as a certificate that he "knew his job." And I refer to it here, in view of the remarkable things that happened during my week-end with Wigmore, to indicate that he was a hard-headed, hard-working, matter-of-fact person, not given to fanciful imaginings. About two years before the date of which I am writing, he had married a Yorkshire woman, who seemed to me, on the few occasions when I met her, to be his match in temperament. She had a London University degree, with honours in history, talked well, and possessed a fund of humorous observation.

The haze which overhung the water-meadows round Bedford, when my train started, had melted into dusk by St. Albans, to reappear at St. Pancras as fog of the density that makes London a place of dirt and misery. But it was not thick enough to blind and strangle, and my hansom, jingling cautiously down the narrows of Judd Street, could be steered by sight as well as instinct for locality. But as I have not that gift, I could not have told whether I was within half a mile of my destination when the cab, after some tentative fumblings, drew up with an air of finality in a street whose identity must remain as indefinite to the reader as its location seemed to me on that night. It must suffice to say that the street where Wigmore had taken up house lies in the district delimited by Holborn and the Embankment, Chancery Lane and Charing Cross Road. It was so far from being a residential street that, at six o'clock on that Saturday evening, the cabman and I seemed to form its whole population. One side of the street was in total darkness at this hour, because it contained nothing but offices and warehouses. On the side where the cab pulled up, blurred pencils of light from windows on the upper floors strove to pierce the gloom. It seemed to me that Wigmore could hardly have chosen a less cheerful place of habitation.

I found his name on the second of four electric bell-pushes, by the side of a door of uncompromising austerity and exclusiveness, and regretted, as I regarded the height of the block, that I had not kept the cabman to carry my suit-case to the third floor. These were no modern flats, with lifts, telephones, and a restaurant. The entrance was "tiled" in a fashion more suggestive of Edinburgh and Glasgow flats of thirty years ago. In response to my ring, the door, obedient to an invisible but not inaudible chain, swung open. I obeyed the printed request to close it behind me. A narrow stair, two flights to each flat, climbed from the end of a short passage into the darkness, mitigated on each floor by rat-tail gas-burners. On each upper floor of this tall, narrow house there were two flats, and on the ground floor nothing but the entrance and passage, piercing two blocks of offices. As I made my way up to the patch of light which indicated Wigmore's open door, he came out and hailed me over the banisters.

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"Hallo, Struthers! That's you. Why on earth didn't you let the cabman bring your bag up?"

"I would have," I said, as we shook hands and passed into a roomy hall, "if I'd known you had risen in the world like this. It used to be one flight in the Temple only."

"Is that Mr. Struthers grumbling already about my nice new home?" said Mrs. Wigmore, coming out of her drawing-room. She gave me a friendly smile which included her husband also. "Take his coat off and bring him in to thaw, Clement."

Mrs. Wigmore had brought from Yorkshire her county's fondness for a wood fire, which cracked and roared in a wide old-fashioned grate.

"It would be very thick driving down from the station," she said, as I settled into an arm-chair. "We seem to be having more fogs this winter than last."

"That's not surprising," I answered. "We must blame Clement's articles on Tariff Reform."

Mrs. Wigmore looked at me quizzically. "I suppose, Mr. Struthers, that's your genial Scotch way of congratulating him."

"Here," said Wigmore, "no bickering to-night, and no politics either. I'm off the chain, and we're going to take you out to dinner at Oddy's, and a theatre."

"Good!" I said. "I haven't dined in a restaurant or gone to a theatre for about six months."

"That's just about the time we've been here," said Mrs. Wigmore.

"Didn't you find it rather a wrench leaving the Temple?" I asked.

"At first—yes," Mrs. Wigmore answered. "But this is more roomy and quite as quiet, and as handy for Clement at night, and the landlord actually put in a fitted bath for us. He was quite affable about it. You see, the flat had been empty for about a year when we moved in."

"This is a jolly room," I said.

"Yes," she answered, "and the dining-room's not bad either. And we never hear or see anything of our neighbours, except the people in the flat opposite. They are a French couple, and have a lot of visitors, but they are very quiet people."

"The height of human happiness in London," said Wigmore, rising lazily, "is to know nothing about your neighbours. We'd better go and dress now, if we are to have dinner comfortably."

We got back about half-past eleven from a play about which I remember, after this lapse of time, no more than of the dinner which preceded it. Wigmore and his wife were admirable hosts, but they had moments of abstraction which caught my attention from time to time. We climbed the three double flights of stairs, and Wigmore let us in with his latchkey. He pushed the door shut and turned the key in its lock before hanging up his coat and hat, and we passed into the drawing-room, where the maid had left sandwiches and the apparatus for grog, either hot or cold.

Before midnight Mrs. Wigmore vanished, and we two settled down to a talk which ranged back to the day when Wigmore had been flogged for putting worms into the French master's inkpot, in the delusive hope that he would bring one out on his pen. Coming down to more recent times, Wigmore said, with the irrelevance which many people feign when opening an important topic of which they are half afraid—

"How do you think Olive is looking? I'm glad she and you hit it off so well."

"She seems very fit and very lively," I answered. "And one doesn't need to be told that she is happy."

"Do you see any difference in her manner?" Wigmore asked.

"Can't say I do. Perhaps she talks more than she used to, and she is absent-minded now and then."

"Then you noticed it, too," Wigmore said.

"Not any more in her than in you," I answered. "But what are you driving at, Clement?"

He attempted a laugh which trailed off uneasily. "The fact is, old man, that this flat is haunted, and it's beginning to get on both our minds."

"Rot!" I said. "The thing's preposterous. Whoever heard of a flat being haunted? The Psychical Society would never give the idea a second thought. Whoever heard of a ghost three stairs up?"

"I've told myself all these things, and a lot more," said Wigmore moodily, "but they don't do a bit of good. The thing exists, and there is no getting away from it."

"What is it, and how does it show itself?" I asked, merely to humour his mood.

"It's like this," said Wigmore, plainly relieved to get someone to discuss the matter with. "I get in here, as you know, about midnight, as a general rule. More often than not Olive waits up for me, and we have a chat here before we go to bed. Our one maid has been in bed for nearly two hours by then, so, of course, I sport our oak as soon

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as I come in. Well, five times in the last two or three months, when we have left this room to go to our own, the house door has been found standing open."

"I suppose you forgot to lock it, and perhaps the latch is worn and doesn't hold."

"Taking your first point," said Wigmore, "after this thing happened once, my wife watched me lock the door every night for a week, and it happened again during that week. It has happened twice in the presence of a third witness, my brother, who has no imagination at all, and who scoffed at our fancies, as he called them. And it has happened twice since I got a new lock fitted."

"Any other manifestations?" I asked.

"Last Wednesday night I was out of town. On the Thursday forenoon I got back here and found Olive in a state of nervous collapse. Nothing had occurred during the night to scare her, but as she was doing her hair in the morning, about nine, she saw in her mirror our bedroom door open, and a man like a tradesman looking in at her. She asked him sharply what he was doing there, got no reply, and followed him into the lobby. He went down the cross passage leading to the kitchen, and vanished at the end of it. There is no exit from the flat there, and Olive and the maid immediately searched the whole house, and found nobody. The hall door was shut all this time."

"That might be merely imagination and overwrought nerves," I said. "The other thing is more like a case for the police than the psychical experts. But I can understand it getting on your mind."

"I hope this won't put you off your sleep?" said Wigmore.

"Not a bit," I answered, yawning. "Are you thinking of turning in?"

"We may as well," Wigmore answered. "You can talk about this to Olive to-morrow. Perhaps we exaggerate it."

He turned out the gas and opened the door for me. A whiff of cold air met us as we entered the hall.

The front door stood open and well back on its hinges.

II.

MANY people would have said, or, at all events, have looked: "I told you so." But Wigmore did neither. He said nothing at all, and looked troubled—even slightly scared. He closed the door gently with his hand on the lock, to prevent it from snapping, and turned the key very quietly. The lock was well oiled.

"I'll just see that you have everything you want for the night," he said, following me into my bedroom, which was opposite the room in which we had been sitting. He turned up the gas and sat down on the bed.

"What do you make of that?" he asked in a flat voice.

"Seeing is believing," I answered. "It's very strange — it's even uncanny — but I can't say that I make anything of it."

"It's no good talking any more about it to-night," Wigmore said. "I don't want Olive to know that it has happened again to-night, I mean. So I'd better not wait here any longer. You don't think she would hear me shutting the door, do you?"

"No," I answered, "I'm sure she wouldn't. You seemed to do it as quietly as a housebreaker would open it. Practice, I suppose?"

"Yes, I've had to do it once or twice like this," Wigmore said, getting to his feet. "This won't put you off your sleep, I hope."

"Not a bit," I answered.

"There won't be any other incidents to-night," he said. "This exhausts the programme. Got everything you want?"

"Everything, thanks. Good night."

Wigmore went out and closed the door. I waited until I heard his bedroom door shut, and then I turned the key in my own. I did this very quietly, because I did not want Wigmore to think that I was afraid of anything. And I did it, although I knew it was futile as well as cowardly, because any person or thing that could open the Wigmores' front door at pleasure had probably the *entrée* to all parts of the flat. Having locked my door, I undressed slowly and got into bed. The sound of City clocks striking one came to me muffled by fog. It was all very well for Wigmore to say that there was no use talking about it any more to-night, but that did not release me from thinking about it. This was the sixth time that somebody had opened the Wigmores' door late at night or early in the morning, with Wigmore himself, or Wigmore and a friend, sitting only a few yards away, at a time when the house was quiet, and there were no noises to cover the sound of unlocking a door. If Wigmore had told me this story, on the evidence of his own senses and those of his wife, I should have dismissed it as mere hallucination. But there had been other witnesses. I myself had

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seen Wigmore lock his door some time before midnight. And about an hour later I had seen it standing wide open. A London flat presents none of the stage appliances required by ghostly visitants. It has no trapdoors, or haunted rooms, or sliding panels, or secret staircases. I fell to thinking of the plan of the flat, so far as it was known to me. You entered a square hall. On the right were the drawing-room, or living-room, as Mrs. Wigmore preferred to call it, and the dining-room, both facing the street. The room in which I lay was opposite the drawing-room, and the bath-room, with "fitted bath," opposite the dining-room. The door of the Wigmores' bedroom, I had noticed, faced the front door, and it would also have a window to the street. Then a passage at right-angles to the hall ran, as Wigmore had told me, to the kitchen premises. I must ask Mrs. Wigmore to show me that part of the flat where the ghost had disappeared. Was Mrs. Wigmore a somnambulist, with a craze for opening doors? She did not look like one. If she had opened the door in her sleep, there was nothing to prevent this strange incident from "getting on her nerves" when her husband told her of it afterwards, because she would not remember that she had opened the door herself. But then sometimes she had been with Wigmore in the drawing-room, and they had both found the door open when they went to bed. That left the maid, the only other person who could open the door from the inside. She might have a visitor—perhaps a "follower"—concealed on the premises occasionally till late at night. But to slip him out after midnight would be difficult, and to leave the door open would advertise her delinquency. I fell asleep without making anything of Wigmore's problem.

When I went in to breakfast next morning, the Wigmores were already at table. They looked bright and seemed almost gay; but one always doubts the genuineness of hilarity at breakfast, except among the very young.

"Slept well, old man?" Wigmore asked, with a glance at his wife.

"I hope you didn't feel any draught from the open door, Mr. Struthers?" said Mrs. Wigmore.

"Come now, Olive," said Wigmore, "Political references are barred at breakfast. You haven't given him any coffee yet."

"So you've heard about last night, Mrs. Wigmore," I said. "I thought you weren't going to tell her, Clement."

"Heard about it?" echoed Mrs. Wigmore. "Why, I heard Clement shutting the door—at least, I thought I did—and he looked guilty when he came into the room."

"You didn't happen to hear the front door open, Mrs. Wigmore, did you," I asked, "or see it opening?"

Mrs. Wigmore looked puzzled.

"You were playing a joke on us, weren't you, last night? Didn't you slip along, when you left us prosing over the fire, and open the door?"

"Certainly not," said Mrs. Wigmore, her face expressing genuine surprise. "We don't think this any laughing matter—especially at night, when everything is quiet."

"But on a morning like this," I suggested, "when a frosty sun sparkles on the breakfast silver, and we are eating kidney and bacon, it does seem rather nonsense, doesn't it? All the same, it kept me awake till after two this morning."

"I'm so sorry," said Mrs. Wigmore; but her smile really meant: "I'm rather glad you feel like that, too. You know, Mr. Struthers, Clement is just as scared as I ever am, but he's too proud to confess it. He has bought a revolver, to shoot the ghost when he sees him."

Wigmore looked embarrassed.

"I think he is on the right lines, Mrs. Wigmore. This seems to be the prank of somebody who could be perforated. It's a first principle of demonology, isn't it, that ghosts don't need to open doors, because they can pass through them."

"How could anybody open that door from the outside without making some noise that would be heard in the next room?" Wigmore said.

"Just what I asked myself last night," I replied. "I'm pretty certain that the door must be opened from the inside. Your maid doesn't walk in her sleep, Mrs. Wigmore?"

"No," said Mrs. Wigmore positively, "I'm certain she doesn't. And one of the nights when we found the door open there was no one in the house but our two selves."

Can I see the rest of the house some time?" I asked.

'By all means," Mrs. Wigmore said. "Marian goes out about eleven o'clock this morning. Clement's old friend, Ackroyd, has asked us to lunch in his new studio. Then we're going to the Menzies', at Putney, for tea—if we're not dragging you about too much, that is."

When our second after-breakfast pipes

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were smoked out, Wigmore showed me over the flat. The inspection suggested nothing. The Wigmores' bedroom, as already mentioned, occupied one corner of the flat, with the dining-room between it and the drawing-room, all three having windows to the street. Behind their bedroom was the kind of apartment styled by London house-agents as a "maid's room," and designed for a very young and undersized person, who had come under an obligation to stop growing. Behind this room, and opening, like it, off a narrow passage at right-angles to the hall, was a tiny kitchen. At the end of the passage, of which the length was about twenty feet, was a door giving access to a box-room, just large enough to hold the luggage of a small family. This apartment was dimly lit by a very small porthole high up in the back wall. The nearest tenements here, as I ascertained by looking from my bedroom window, were

"There was the sound of someone using a latchkey."

thirty feet away. The windows of the kitchen and the maid's room were heavily barred, evidently because they opened upon a very narrow lane dividing the block in which we were from a lofty pile of offices. Wigmore's home was just an ordinary, not too commodious, old-fashioned flat, at a height of four storeys from the pavement. No less convenient site for spirit manifestations could be imagined, or for the furtive entry of "burglars" whose eccentric habit was to come in while the front windows showed that the householders had not gone to bed, and to depart without taking any booty, leaving the front door open.

We dismissed the subject for the next four or five hours, and I had completely forgotten it until we were on our way back, in the evening, from the District Station at Charing Cross. Mrs. Wigmore, who had been chatting gaily, recalling some of the shortcomings of lunch in a new studio, and the accent of an ultra-Scotch lady whom we had met at tea, grew suddenly quiet as she neared her home. As we turned into the street, she looked up at the windows of the flat.

"Marian's a good soul," she said. "I didn't expect her till after seven, and she's come in an hour earlier, to make toast for us. We usually get our own supper on Sundays, Mr. Struthers."

Wigmore opened the door. There was a light in the dining-room, and the door stood ajar. Wigmore and I went into the drawing-room. He lit the gas, and we sat down by the fire, which had been judiciously "banked" before we left. Mrs. Wigmore had disappeared up the passage leading to the kitchen as soon as she entered the house. Almost instantly she entered the room where we were sitting.

"Clement," she said in a voice that she tried vainly to steady, "Marian isn't in, and the dining-room gases are lit and full up." Then she collapsed, rather than sat down, on a sofa, and began to sob, openly and unashamed, like a frightened child

III.

WIGMORE looked surprised for a moment, and then thoroughly scared. I was puzzled and silent. Mrs. Wigmore sat up and began to dab her eyes with her handkerchief. "I'm so sorry, Mr. Struthers. You must think you have come to a mad-house for the week-end."

"I'm very sorry you have been upset," I said. "I don't quite know how."

"Perhaps," said Wigmore, gnawing his moustache uneasily, "Marian came in before and went out again."

I did not find this suggestion illuminating. There was the sound of someone using a latchkey.

"That's Marian now," said Mrs. Wigmore, rising and going out of the room. We heard Marian explaining that she meant to have been back an hour sooner, but had missed her train. Wigmore shut the door and turned to me.

"What is this new trouble?" I asked him.

"It may seem silly to you," Wigmore said, "but these things are cumulative. Somebody lit the dining-room gas when we were all out. I didn't tell you about this phenomenon before. That's the third time it has happened. The first time Marian was in, and might have done it absent-mindedly while it was still full daylight. But she was certain that she did not. That was at the end of the summer. The second time she was out, just as she was to-night, and it was done while Olive and I were sitting in this room. To-night—well, you have seen for yourself. What do you think about it?"

"I think I would rather live somewhere else, if I were you."

"It's getting on your nerves already, then?" he said, in a tone of relief. "However, nothing more is likely to happen for a week or two. Let's have some supper."

At that meal the Wigmores talked more than I did. Mrs. Wigmore seemed to have recovered her composure.

"Mr. Struthers is taking furtive looks at the gasolier, Clement," she said. "It's all nonsense, of course. Whoever heard of a ghost carrying a box of matches? He would have no vest pocket to put them in."

"It might be the ghost of a plumber who had died in this flat while waiting for the boy to bring his tools," I suggested.

"And that would account for his leaving the door open," said Wigmore.

"And that disposes of the whole case," said Mrs. Wigmore. But she added, with seeming irrelevance: "Will you be late to-night, Clement?"

"All the same," I said, "I'd like very much to know how the gas was lit in this room when we were all out of the house. Do you leave a box of matches handy for the plumber's ghost?"

Mrs. Wigmore was caressing some chrysanthemum blooms in a bowl which stood on the supper table. "No," she said, "but some untidy person has dropped a match

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among my flowers." She picked out the match daintily and laid it on her plate as we rose from the table.

"May I have a look at that, Mrs. Wigmore?" I asked.

She handed it to me. It was a thick, clumsy, sulphur-coated French wooden match. I glanced at it and passed it over to Wigmore.

"That's a curious-looking lucifer," I said. "You don't use French matches, Mrs. Wigmore, surely?"

"No," she said. "We support home industries. You seem to be interested in this match, Mr. Struthers?"

"I am," I said. "It hasn't been struck, you see, and I think it may have been dropped where you found it by the person who lit the gas for our supper."

"On the contrary," Wigmore objected, "it may have been among the flowers when they were brought in."

"It certainly wasn't," Mrs. Wigmore answered. "I arranged these chrysanthemums myself. And the match was lying right on the top of that yellow bloom."

"I think it's quite clear, Clement," I said, "that the person who lit the gas here dropped that match without noticing that he had done so, although he was careful to remove the match that he used."

"That seems probable," Wigmore assented. "But how did he get in?"

"By the door," I said. "If people can enter this flat, or at least open the door, when you are all in the flat, they can do so when you are all out."

"That's indisputable," Mrs. Wigmore said gaily; "it's even obvious, Mr. Struthers. And what next?"

"Well, there may be nothing in it, but I'd rather like to have a look at the front door."

"Just now?" Wigmore asked.

"No," I said, "it might be better to wait till you come in from the office. Your neighbours will be in bed by then."

"What have they got to do with it?" Mrs. Wigmore asked.

"I don't know," I said. "But if they are French people, as you told me yesterday, they are the nearest source of a box of matches such as this. I don't want to disturb them or be disturbed by them."

When Wigmore went out to his night's work, I walked part of the way with him to his office, and then paid a call on a friend in King's Bench Walk. I got back to the Wigmores' flat some time after eleven. There was no light in any of the windows of the flat opposite, and none showed in the fanlight over the door. So, before using Wigmore's latchkey, I examined his door, using several matches, as the gas-jet on the stair was not brilliant.

The door was of solid construction, and so were its plain square posts. Their only feature was a crude attempt at decoration—a pattern of holes, about an inch square, and about nine inches apart. There were five on the left-hand post, and four on the other, the bell-pull coming in place of the fifth or middle ornament of this very simple design, which had been cut to a depth of an inch or less. I stood some moments looking at the door, whose mysterious opening caused the Wigmores so much concern, and idly followed the pattern with the point of my walking-stick. When I brought it down to the lowest hole, about a foot from the floor, on the left-hand door-post, my stick slipped in to the extent of six inches, as nearly as I could measure by eye. I felt suddenly that I was on the way to solve the mystery of the open door, and that by the merest accident. I put a little upward pull on the stick, and fancied that the door-post yielded slightly. Then my stick broke with a sharp crack. At the same moment the street door banged, and Wigmore came lightly upstairs.

"You're back early," I said.

"Yes," he answered. "Very little doing to-night. Hallo, you've broken your stick!"

"Yes. I was trying to open your door with it."

Wigmore smiled. "You'll find the latchkey handier."

We let ourselves in, and Wigmore shut the door. I put down the remains of my walking-stick on the hall table, and we went into the drawing-room.

"Mr. Struthers has been trying to open the door with his walking-stick," Wigmore said.

"Have you found out anything, Mr. Struthers?" Mrs. Wigmore asked anxiously.

"Something," I said—"I don't know exactly how much. But I've a notion that if you have a good strong kitchen poker, and lend it to me, I might be able to let myself in, after you locked me out. I'm not sure, but I'd like to try."

"I'll get you that in a moment," said Mrs. Wigmore. "It will be the first time a ghost has been laid with a kitchen poker!"

She came back with a short, strong, serviceable implement. I slipped it under my overcoat. Wigmore let me out, shut

the front door and locked it in the usual way, and returned to the drawing-room, closing the door after him. They had promised "not to listen more than they could help." I waited for a couple of minutes to make sure that nobody was on the staircase below or above. Then I pushed the poker home in the hole which had broken my walking-stick. A gentle pull raised the door-post almost imperceptibly, hardly half an inch at the most, but enough to let me feel that it was pivoted. Thus raised, the post had about an inch of play in the direction which moved the boss-heads of the locks, if that is the proper technical term, away from their bolts. Just as soon as I made this discovery, the door swung quietly inwards of its own accord, with the hospitable instinct of many doors in old houses, and even in very new houses of the jerry-builder. I turned the door-post back to its normal position, and it sank imperceptibly into its tray or socket. Then I walked into the drawing-room, and returned the poker to Mrs. Wigmore with a flourish.

"The ghost is laid permanently," I said. "Did you hear anything?"

"Nothing at all," Mrs. Wigmore said. "Did you shut the door after you? Mr. Struthers?"

"No," I said. "I wanted to show you that there was absolutely no deception."

"I'll lock up again," Wigmore said, "though it's only a matter of form locking up, if a kitchen poker will open it. Come and show us how it is done."

So I showed them, and then we shut the door finally for the night.

Next forenoon Wigmore got two pieces of angle iron and secured the door-post rigidly to the floor, inside the house, with stout screws.

Before that we tried a little experiment. Marian was sent to the flat opposite, with Mrs. Wigmore's compliments, and a polite request for a few matches, as Mrs. Wigmore had run out of them. A foreign-looking man, whom the maid had never seen before, came to the door and gave her half a dozen sulphur-coated French matches, which he took from a box in his pocket. So we knew who had lit the gas for our supper on that memorable Sunday. The Wigmore ghost was laid.

Some months after it was also explained, when the police visited the flat opposite, to the distress of a resetter of stolen goods, with a flourishing Continental connection. The flat opposite was a warehouse of valuables, and the police inquiry disclosed the fact that Duprez and his wife had moved from the Wigmores' flat about three years before. They had told the landlord that they wanted a smaller house. Duprez, to use one of his many aliases, thought it would be convenient that the flat opposite should be empty, and accordingly he devised and prepared a simple means of scaring tenants out of it.

And he had another reason for requiring occasional access to the Wigmores' flat, in addition to his desire to scare and put to flight near neighbours who might pry into the coming and going of his many clients. The police investigation of the Wigmores' flat—far worse than a spring-cleaning, as Mrs. Wigmore ruefully remarked—disclosed two cleverly-constructed caches, one in a shutter of the dining-room, and another in the skirting-board of the bedroom I had occupied. These hiding-places contained unset diamonds to the value of fully two thousand pounds. But for the dropping of a match, Duprez would shortly have had complete control of both flats and freedom from espionage, for, at the time I visited them, the Wigmores had resolved to leave immediately. Candour compels me to confess that a second experience of the Wigmore mysteries would have driven me to the same decision.

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THE CABBAGE VENDETTA.

By C. L. ANTROBUS,

Author of "Wildersmoor," "Quality Corner," "The Stone Ezel," etc.

KAYE, the blacksmith, sat on an upturned bucket and expressed his opinion of his neighbour Fullarton, the baker. At this moment his only auditor was his son Sam, a stalwart young fellow, who was the accepted suitor of the baker's daughter. Both families had agreed to the marriage, when perverse Fate created sudden discord by inspiring Fullarton to insist on an impossible condition. Emma, he said, should bring her husband a hundred pounds on her wedding day, provided the condition were fulfilled. If not, added the baker sourly, she should marry Sam Kaye with but half-a-crown in her pocket.

This ultimatum was a serious matter, and the whole town took sides, as was customary. Not that Fullarton received much backing from his fellow-townsmen, his attitude being considered indefensible and calculated to provoke a breach of the peace—indeed, bets were freely made as to the probable nature of the elder Kaye's reply; but there were some who advised the smith to accede to the outrageous demand, for the sake of quietness and the dowry.

Forge and bakery occupied two sides of a corner, and they made that corner the liveliest, most crowded part of the town, save the market-place on market days. Even then the buyers and sellers drifted towards the forge as the market ebbed; it was the centre of gossip for the men, while the bakery was the great meeting point of the women. In short, the corner was cheerful and comforting, with the pleasant fragrance of hot bread filling the street when the ovens were "drawn," the tinkle-tinkle of the anvil, the roar of the fire—food, warmth, life, friendliness.

Behind both buildings were long gardens, cultivated with pride by their respective owners; for Kaye and Fullarton had won prizes for flowers and vegetables, not only at the local shows, but even at the great agricultural show of the county, and they intended to win more. The smith always exhibited flowers, the baker vegetables; thus there was no acute rivalry between them. Moreover, whereas Kaye kept a pig, Fullarton, whose trade needed a cart, owned a middle-aged pony and a remarkably fine donkey of aristocratic lineage, these diverse possessions making for friendly interest, Kaye having the shoeing of his neighbour's animals, and, by way of polite reciprocity, buying most of the family bread from the ovens next door, notwithstanding the excellence of Mrs. Kaye's "home-made." But, as that sagacious woman observed: "'Twas well to be neighbourly wi' a weasel loike Fullarton!"

Yet the gardens were the original cause of the difficulty which now exercised the minds of all Ringway. In the previous autumn, Fullarton's savoy cabbages had attained a size hitherto unknown, and the baker's heart was greatly uplifted by reason of the approaching date of the county show; assuredly the cabbages would surpass all others, and much glory would be his. Two days before the show, a gale blew up from the south-west. Ringway knew those gales. Built on the side of a low hill, and having only a still lower hill between itself and the sea, some twenty-five miles away, the little town faced the full fury of the sou'-westers as they roared up from the coast, lifting chimney-pots and uprooting trees on their path across the level country. Ringway rather liked a big gale; it did an amount of damage that afforded conversation for months. This particular sou'-wester distinguished itself above its fellows by creating the cabbage vendetta. It unroofed Fullarton's stable in such fashion that portions of the roof demolished part of the dividing wall between the two gardens and smashed one end of Kaye's pigsty, not the end containing the pig; and in the hurry and confusion of removing pony and donkey by lantern-light to safer quarters, the damage to

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the pigsty passed unnoticed. Therefore it so chanced that, when Fullarton looked out of his window at dawn the next morning, his eyes fell upon Kaye's pig in bliss among the cabbages. Within two minutes those at the forge became aware that something unusual was happening. Shouts, objurgations, blows, squeals, resounded on the air, and the smith, rushing out, beheld his neighbour in furious chase of the pig, which, with the innate perversity of his kind, ran anywhere save in the direction of his own domicile, pursuer and pursued trampling hither and thither with equal recklessness, so that though only two savoys had been actually eaten, the rest were "in one green ruin blent."

"Tha's making it wuss!" cried Kaye.

Fullarton answered not, but redoubled his exertions. Then Sam, dashing into the fray, dexterously seized the pig in orthodox style by tail and hind leg at one and the same moment, and conducted him, drover fashion, on the other three legs, to his own premises, securing him therein.

"I'll give thee a soide when I kill 'un," said Kaye in conciliatory tones, as Sam wheeled off the protesting animal.

"Fur to send to th' show loike a cabbage?" inquired the baker with sour scorn, and he sulkily retired indoors.

Kaye felt injured. "It wur th' storm as did it," said he to his son. "Who'd ha' thowt o' looking at th' sty last neet? Well, I'll build up th' garden wall. 'Tis betwixt us, an' 'tis noan fault o' mine, but I'll stond th' cost mysen." Which he did.

Despite this generosity, relations were strained for some months between forge and bakery, owing to Fullarton's persistent sulkiness, till the wives, and the son on the one side and the daughter on the other, succeeded in smoothing matters, though when Kaye repeated his offer of the "soide o' bacon" at Christmas, the baker refused the offer with acrimonious disdain. However, peace was supposed to have been concluded, and the date of the wedding was under discussion, when Fullarton suddenly made the outrageous demand that his donkey should be turned loose in the forge garden and allowed to eat what it pleased, in which case he would overlook the matter of the savoys, and Emma should have her hundred pounds, otherwise the dowry would dwindle to half-a-crown.

Now, it so happened that Kaye was growing some particularly fine carnations for exhibition at the July flower show in the following week, and there could be no possible doubt that the baker's ultimatum was aimed at these. He had lost his chance of glory with his cabbages, therefore Kaye should not triumph with carnations; and the wrath of the smith rose high as he sat on the upturned bucket in the cool, shadowy forge that hot, sunny afternoon, and told his son what he thought of the son's future father-in-law.

"Th' ill-farrant nowt, a-keeping a' yon spite in's moind fur ten month, an' me a-building up th' wall an' a'!"

"'Tis a pedigree donkey," said Sam, with a vague idea that the distinguished lineage of the animal might alleviate the atrocity of the proposal.

"What do I care what sort o' donkey 'tis, be it pedigree or tinker's? They've a' getten th' same kind o' mouth, hannot they? 'Tisna natural fur a donkey to eat carnations, an' no man con say as 'tis. Now, a pig naturally goes fur cabbages, an' didn't I tell Fullarton twice o'er I'd give him a soide o' th' pig when I killed 'un, which I reckon wur worth a sight more nor th' savoys?"

"Aye, but it wur happen th' loss o' th' prize at th' show as makes him woild."

"An' what about my prize? Sithee, yon shoe's nigh black!" For Sam was standing in meditation, holding in the pincers a shoe taken from the fire.

"I wur a-thinking," he replied, putting the iron back in the flame.

"Well, thee mun do thy thinking o' Sundays; theer's noan toime fur't betwixt fire an' anvil. An' thy talk o' prizes is nowt!"

"A' reet," responded Sam placidly, "but a mon mun say what he thinks."

"I dunno about that. It a' depends on what he's a-thinking. I'm a-thinking thee nobbut a fool, but tha wouldna be pleased if tha heerd me say so."

"Thee mout ask parson to ha' a talk wi' Fullarton," was Sam's next venture.

"Nay, he's o'er-young fur to fettle a job loike this, an' o'erfull o' whim-whams. He mout tell me to give in to Fullarton fur peace an' quietness, an' I willna; an' then he'd happen make out as it wur a' some new sort o' sin. Nowadays folks is allus a-making new sins fur to worrit o'er. I loike to stick to th' owd uns i' th' Commandments. Theer's enow o' them fur any reasonable mon, an' yo' con see th' sense on 'em. Theer's noan sense i' th' sins folks make up fur theirsen."

At this moment an elderly farmer walked into the smithy; his horse was awaiting the shoe that Sam again took from the fire.

"I'll ha' it on i' a jiffy," said he apologetically.

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"Theer's noan hurry. I reckon it'll be two hours good afore I start whoam."

"Set thee down, Martin." Kaye hospitably dragged forward a rough bench, sweeping off the tools lying on it. "We wur talking o' this marlock o' Fullarton's."

"Aye, aye, it fair beats a'! I moind well how his feyther before him wur a worritin' sort, an' his gronfeyther, too. 'Tis in 'em."

"It'll ha' to be out on 'em as fur as I've owt to do wi' it," observed Kaye with emphasis.

"I dunnot care fur th' brass," declared Sam, as several more men strolled in, one being that incorrigible poacher, general favourite, and universal confidant, Billy Cockeye. "I dunnot care fur th' brass—we con do wi'out it—but Emma thinks hoo ought to ha' it."

"Hoo's a sensible lass," said Farmer Martin. "Yo con do wi'out it, an' yo' con do wi' it. Theer's a mort o' satisfaction i' having a hunnerd pound ready to one's hond i' th' bank; 'tis a good coat on a frosty day."

"So 'tis, so 'tis," agreed another man, "but who's to mak' Fullarton behave hissen reasonable?"

"Theer's somebody wants to see thee outsoide, Sam," said Billy in an undertone, as Kaye and his friends plunged into an animated discussion of the baker's demand; and Sam, having finished the shoeing of the farmer's horse, vanished for a few minutes.

Meanwhile, his *fiancée* was leaning over the low garden wall, talking to his mother, who, in the cool shadow of the back porch, sat knitting a vast stocking. The heat and sunshine of July lay on the gardens, bringing out scent of honeysuckle and sweet briar and the spice odours of Kaye's carnations. Sounds of life came pleasantly to the ear—the rustle of the warm wind in the trees, the intermittent clang of hammer and ringing of the anvil, the roar of the fire, and hum of voices mingling with laughter, and, farther away, the confused murmur of the little town on market day, when Ringway woke up and tried to be noisy like bigger towns.

Emma Fullarton was a buxom young woman, rosy-cheeked and grey-eyed, energetic, too, and by no means disposed to lose her dowry because her father cherished ill-will towards his neighbour.

"Feyther's driven o'er to Northover," she said; "he's gone to sell a bit o' land theer. An' he's in a rare fix, fur he wants th' donkey shod, and he conna fur shame bring it here; and th' Sandiway forge is three mile off, an' he dunnot loike th' smith."

"I wonder he didna bring th' beast fur shoeing afore he sprung a' this on Tom," remarked Mrs. Kaye sardonically. "But Sam'll fettle it fur thee; he'll shoe th' creature if tha tells him tha wants it done. Best let him do th' job while thy feyther's at Northover."

"Billy Cockeye wur at th' end o' th' street a minute sin'; happen he wur going into th' forge," said Emma.

"Well, look an' see, an' tell him to send Sam out to thee."

The girl disappeared, returning in a moment or two. "I caught him as he wur going in."

Mrs. Kaye nodded approval. "Thot's reet. I could ha' fetched out Sam mysen, but 'tis best not. Tom'll chunner a bit when he sees th' donkey, but Sam and Billy'll smooth him o'er, an' he'll be pleased wi' hissen fur giving in. Allus let a mon think he's doing as he pleases, an' if a toime cooms when tha must mak' a noise about summat, mak' a noise an' stick to it; but dunnot mak' it o'er often, or th' mon'll get used to it. If tha makes it but seldom, he'll be that surprised he'll let thee ha' thy own way."

Emma laughed. "Mother conna manage feyther noways."

"I reckon nobody else could neither; thy feyther isna easy to deal wi'. A mon's trade's a lot to do wi' his temper, an' bakers is mostly worriting; 'tis th' stewing o'er th' ovens as does it. Now, blacksmiths is quiet enow. Theer's cool air i' th' forge, an' a' th' hammering does 'em good—takes it out on 'em, an' they coom in peaceable to meals. Tha'll find Sam a reasonable lad so long as he gets his victuals regular."

The girl smiled, and was silent a moment. "I mean to ha' yon hundred pound," she remarked with decision. "I hannot patience wi' feyther! I've more nor half a moind——"

Mrs. Kaye checked the coming confidence. "Nay, dunnot tell me," said the astute matron, "an' if tha plays any sort o' marlock fur to straighten this knot o' thy feyther's tying, tha'll be wise if tha never speaks on't to Sam. Men conna keep secrets, an' Sam'll be letting it out, sure enow, an' happen his feyther willna be pleased. It dunnot do to tell men-folk o'ermuch; they're nobbut babes, an' mun be towd what's best for them to hear. When a woman's new-wed, she'll tell her man a sight more than's good fur him. Thee bear that i' moind, Emma."

Here Sam Kaye appeared in response to the message sent through Billy, and, on

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hearing what was required of him, led off the donkey.

The forge was tolerably full of loungers when Kaye's eyes fell upon his son and the animal he was leading. The smith's astonishment was so great that the two had walked through the doorway and were fairly inside before his power of speech returned. General conversation had ceased, the attention of all present being centred on Sam and his four-legged companion.

"Take yon beast back again!" roared Kaye. "What art tha thinking on?"

"I've browt it fur shoeing"—serenely.

"Fur shoeing?" The smith nearly choked. "Fullarton con shoe it hissen! Tell him so! Th' face on him—a-sending yon donkey fur shoeing when——"

"Fullarton hasna sent it," interrupted Sam. "He's o'er at Northover, an' knows nowt about it. Emma asked me a minute sin' if I'd do th' job."

"Eh, well, if 'tis to please his sweetheart," put in Farmer Martin soothingly, addressing Kaye.

"A mon conna say 'No' to his lass, even if hoo asked him to shoe th' Devil," remarked Billy Cockeye, and a murmer of amused assent went round.

There was a visible struggle in the smith's mind between his natural kindliness and his resentment against his neighbour.

"Dunnot let me see th' shoeing, then," he said, after a moment's pause. "Take it o'er there"—pointing over his shoulder with his thumb—"behind my back. I conna stond th' sight on't. Mout as well ha' Fullarton hissen i' th' place!"

The forge had two doors besides the main entrance, one at the side, opening into the house, the other at the far end, opening into the garden. This hot day of July the garden door was set wide, giving a glimpse of sunlit green beyond, and letting in the summer breeze, and Sam obediently led the donkey quite to the end of the smithy, beside this door, throwing the halter over a hook in the jamb.

This done, the usual hum of gossip rose again while Sam proceeded with the shoeing.

Now, Billy was a notable peacemaker, and, though ordinarily a silent man, could relate good stories when inclined so to do. This afternoon he exerted himself to entertain, and thereby divert Kaye's mind from baker and donkey; and the company became hilarious, forgetting Fullarton and his "worriting." Billy's example stimulated others, so that Sam, having finished his shoeing, stood by the anvil, his back to the garden door, listening and laughing with the rest.

Whether a terrific squint enables a man to see more than those not so endowed, or whether an accomplished poacher is of necessity more observant than his fellows, need not be argued here; certain it is that nothing escaped Billy's vision. While he was apparently gazing straight before him, absorbed in the tale being told by his particular crony, the cobbler, he distinctly saw a hand and arm, strong, shapely, rosy-white, evidently belonging to a young woman, come round the jamb of the garden door, slip the halter from the hook and draw the donkey gently out and away. No one else noticed its departure, and Billy held his peace. Perhaps ten or fifteen minutes elapsed before the story and resultant laughter came to an end; then Sam turned round, intending to lead the donkey home, when, lo, the animal had vanished! Bewilderment seized him, and he remained staring blankly at the place where the creature ought to have been. Something in his rigid attitude drew attention.

"What's up, lad?" inquired the cobbler; and Billy straightened himself from his lounging position, ready to take a hand in whatever might be forthcoming.

Sam did not reply to the cobbler's question, but made a headlong rush into the garden, and Billy followed more slowly. By this time all eyes, including Kaye's, were on that open door. There was the sound of a heavy slap upon something solid, then, as though propelled by the slap, the donkey suddenly came into sight, and from its mouth hung bright-coloured carnations; behind the animal were Sam and Billy.

There was silence in the forge as the three advanced. Kaye rose to his feet. "How many on 'em's gone?" he asked in tones of ominous calm.

It was Billy Cockeye who replied. "Eh, well," said he, putting the best side of things foremost, as he invariably did, "'tis summat to think Fullarton mun hond o'er every penny o' yon hundred pound."

Kaye sat down again. This time his speechlessness was more enduring than before; there were no words befitting a catastrophe so overwhelming; he had not expected such complete desolation. The donkey trotted briskly through the smithy, passing out into the street, Sam following, scarlet with embarrassment and concern. Billy remained, lounging against the wall as though nothing had happened, and for

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perhaps half a minute the silence continued. Then Farmer Martin spoke.

"I'm blessed if yon beast hasna as mooch

unable to resist the general merriment. This whole-souled Homeric laughter rang out into the hot, sunny street, where scattered

"The donkey trotted briskly through the smithy."

sense as Balaam's—he's fettled th' job fur thee, Kaye!" And the farmer burst into a roar of laughter, as did every man present; even Kaye at last laughed with the rest,

groups were discussing the day's market, and on to the cobbled yard of the old inn, where the pig-drovers argued over their pigs and their beer, and hearing the laughter,

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dispatched one of themselves with instructions to "bring back yon tale sharp," which being done, they too waxed hilarious. Thus it passed up into the market-place, where the shopkeepers stood at their doors and gossiped with the country folk, and so round the town till all Ringway was laughing like the Merry City of the Fairies, and thence out into the highways; and Fullarton, driving home with a sour countenance, feeling that his fellow-townsmen disapproved of his ultimatum, came upon two or three of his acquaintances leaning against a gate and laughing consumedly. One of them signalled to the baker to stop, and he pulled up.

"See here, owd lad," said the signaller, "'tis a rare donkey o' thine! I reckon he's left thee nowt to do but give they blessing an' th' hunnerd pound. Thou an' Kaye be square now. Aye, 'tis a rare donkey!"—lapsing into merriment.

Fullarton expressed the opinion that the speaker had looked too often upon the beer when it was creaming gently.

"Nay," said the aspersed one, "thou'rt wrong fur once; 'tis noan beer, 'tis truth. Thee go whoam an' see; they'll tell thee fast enow!"

Doubtful and suspicious, Fullarton gathered up the reins and drove on without replying.

That evening, when the sun was setting redly beyond Ringway woods, and cool airs were blowing through the little town, Billy chanced to meet Emma Fullarton returning from an errand.

"Emma, lass," he observed confidentially, "me an' th' donkey'll say nowt, an' if I wur thee, I'd say nowt neither. It wur a rare thought o' thine, an' 'tis best kept to thysen."

"Did tha see me?" she laughed. "I dunnot mean to say owt, not even to mother nor Sam."

Billy nodded. "Stick to that, lass! 'Twill be well." And he walked on.

Billy was best man; he was also one of the witnesses who counted the hundred sovereigns that Fullarton formally handed to his daughter on her wedding morning.

TO DELIA.

ANOTHER'S eyes would see, no doubt,
Among your lovers so devout,
One swain at least who made pretence
To be of fitting excellence.
Yet, Delia, all alike you flout,
And banish with disdainful pout;
One roams disconsolate about,
Another raves bereft of sense,
Another sighs!

Our suits on varied grounds you scout—
Too tall, too short, too thin, too stout;
If me you scorn for lack of pence,
I will petition Providence
To let my slender income out
Another size!

HANSARD WATT.

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THE PEARL OF THE DESERT.

By ARTHUR APPLIN.

JIM SAVAGE twisted on his bed and tried to alter the position of his pillow. It evaded his fumbling fingers. He opened his eyes and tried to locate it, but he could see nothing save a blaze of light. He turned on the pillow, which rose with a jerk to meet his face, and tumbled heavily into unconsciousness again.

His sleep was not altogether satisfactory. He was always aware of the blinding blaze, of gradually increasing heat, bringing with it a sense of suffocation and a peculiar tingling of the skin. He wondered dreamily if the shack, saloon, or hotel—wherever he happened to be—were on fire. Something, flames possibly, or millions of fiery sparks, spat into his face, covered his lips and crept into his ears, circling around his neck, finding their way under his shirt and burning his arms and legs.

He cursed lazily, altered his position, again struggled to find and hold the elusive pillow and pull the blanket over his body. Without a doubt the club was on fire—he remembered now where he was.

Once again he opened his eyes. Someone was trying to awaken him, gently but persistently digging his ribs. The blazing light prevented him from seeing who it was, but he awoke sufficiently to realise that he did not want to awaken ever again.

"Go 'way—quit, I tell yer! Lemme burn! I got to burn eventually—may as well start right in now!"

For the space of a few moments he was left in peace, but presently the persistent nudging recommenced. Moreover, in spite of Savage's avowed desire to be left to burn, the sparks burned too fiercely to be tolerated. He rolled over and sat upright.

And he laughed. The pillow he had fought with so persistently was a mound of shifting sand, burning sand his blanket too, the desert his hostel, the sky his roof, and the flames that scorched were the rays of the sun high in the sky—steel blue and dirty white, and a violet haze of distant hills, barren as the sands. Again Savage laughed, then turned his bloodshot eyes on the only living creature visible, his horse.

"How long have you been digging away at me, Sam, eh? Say, you look crumpled, too. How'd we get here, anyway?"

He struggled to his feet, swaying to and fro, shaded his eyes with his hands, gazed west and east.

"We were at the Arizona Club when I went to sleep, but where th' blazes we are now, you and Heaven alone know!"

He dropped to his knees and tried to shake the grains of blistering sand from his clothes. A breeze of burning wind swept across the desert, as if to mock his efforts, blinding him and covering him with its evil dust. He spat it out with oaths right and left, cursing the beast standing motionless by his side.

"You brought me here, curse you, and here we'll remain till the flesh rots from our bones! You've turned against me, Sam, have you? Hosses and friends are all the same in th' end," he choked stupidly. "I know. I've had th' luck, and played it out, and now it's quit for good. But Swift Neil don't get us, lad, though he won us! Can't say I don't fight. Gee, I've fought like blazes! Leave me alone, Sam. Go back and tell the boys that Jim Savage has quit. He's goin' ter feed coyotes now instead of Swift Neil and the rest of them blamed Arizona wolves!"

And the man rolled over again and slept, for the drink was still in his blood. The horse raised his head high in the air, the soft velvet nostrils dilated, and neighed shrilly. There was no answer; the wind blew silently and the shifting sands made no sound. One big bird, black against the blue, hovered overhead, waiting.

Again the horse neighed, dropped his head, and nosed his master. Then, in sudden panic, as a cloud of dust rose high and the bird swooped low, he turned and galloped madly away—away towards the distant, elusive line of violet hills.

And the man was quite alone.

Higher in the sky the sun rose, an inverted

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bowl of fire, spilling its heat remorselessly on the grey figure half buried in dust and scrub. From east to west its course lay, and never a shadow anywhere between the range of hills, dry tufts of grass that parched the tongue to see, here a cactus thrusting out stupid, crooked arms blindly, there a dwarfed Spanish palm that never flowered, and everywhere silence.

Once or twice the figure stirred and muttered to the shifting sands, once again the waiting bird swooped right down, perchance to see how long before its meal would be ready. But it was not until the sun, sand-weary, hied to the mountains, and night came suddenly, and with kind, cool fingers smoothed the blistering land and hid the thirsty grass and smoking stones, that Jim Savage once again raised his head and wiped the dust from his face, and knew that, in spite of drink and sun, he lived.

He stared through the starlit waste, his the only life—not even the bird blotting heaven or a stray coyote hungering for supper. For the third time he laughed, and then with an effort rose to his feet, stumbling to and fro, fighting to regain his equilibrium and searching for memory. He fell once, and, falling, a stone rattled against something hard in his breast-pocket—the whisky flask. Frantically he pulled it out, and found still a little poison left. Death twenty-four hours ago, it served life now, and cheated him into believing he desired to live.

Groping feebly as he reeled forward, he grasped one by one stray strings of memory, and childishly cried as, tugging them, they shook his heart. For the moment he was lost—lost as surely as if he had found himself in the heart of a great city.

Every now and again he stopped to gaze across that starlit wilderness, and every time he stopped, the desert changed completely. First, only an ocean of sand rolled in dry breakers away from his shifting feet, then he saw giant trees casting shadows across a silver lake. Again, a river threatened to sweep him away, and in its bed he saw gold shining, and he chuckled as he bared his arms ready to dive into the depths. And last time he looked, flowers covered the arid waste; their perfume was strong in his nostrils, their colour gladdened his eyes. The cactus trees blossomed, too, and their crooked arms made delightful resting-places.

But each mirage, as he lurched to gain it, disappeared. Yet he stumbled forward. His tongue began to swell, until it protruded from his mouth, caked with sand, each grain embedded deep in the flesh.

Why, he asked himself fiercely, had he struggled forward—with what object? Las Vegas lay north, and he was pursuing the sun, that had surely burnt madness into his brain. He did not want to live, unless it were for revenge.

He paused to consider this new idea. A dim sense of desert justice gripped him still, and he argued patiently with himself, calling to mind and speaking aloud the names of friend and foe. He had played their game and lost. Revenge? He spat the thought into the dust.

He wandered into the darkness. The stars danced madly overhead. Sometimes he saw them reflected at his feet, and then he would cautiously stoop to pick them up, laughing at his cunning. He fell often, and with each fresh fall he lay longer in the sand.

An hour before dawn a shout rose from his parched throat. The foot-hills stood suddenly before him, trees bowed down to greet him; he felt their twisted roots beneath his feet, their gnarled branches struck him repeatedly. If only he could find one drop of water! He could go no further without it, and he slid to the ground, holding fast one of the barren branches.

Something moved a few yards away—something that, in the mysterious light, looked very big. Savage watched, listening, for it was life, and life meant drink.

He recognised it—a lean, miserable coyote. His hand slipped to his pocket and found his revolver. He rested it against his knees, and he waited—hours, it seemed; but at length the brute was close—so close he thought he could feel its hot breath. Then he fired, and it fell.

And the sun jumped suddenly above the red horizon, and glared at a man kneeling beside something black against the white sand, eagerly drinking of its blood. And, driving his chariot forward, the sun forced the man to leave his horrid meal and once more chase the mirage of the hills and forests and rivers.

He was strong again; he walked erect with fire in his eyes. He would reach those hills—he had sworn it, he, Jim Savage, who ever kept his oath.

Even on his hands and knees he crawled forward, and then, looming suddenly in his path, he saw a black, circular hole, as if night were hiding at the entrance of a cañon.

Dragging himself towards it, he entered a cave. There was just room for him to crawl

"He saw something flash in her hand as the rope of live steel rose to spring."

through the opening, but once inside he could stand upright or lie at full length, and neither sun nor heat nor sand nor wind could touch him.

He cast himself on the cool ground, and, raising his head a few inches, he looked through the opening of the cave out on to the vista of blinding desert—powerless now to hurt him—and he laughed, shaking his fist at it, spitting curses at it.

II.

At first his sleep was broken. It was good to awaken and look out through the hole in the

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night that was his, and curse the sunlight and the dust rising in misty pillars; it was good to realise ever and ever again the security that was his. Once, when he awoke, night was everywhere, and he could see nothing, neither sun nor starshine; when he raised his hand before his face, it was invisible.

Then fear struck him, and he covered his face and lay very still, scarcely daring to breathe, until sleep returned, bringing her dreams—such dreams, and this last sleep a very long one—dreams of the valleys of his childhood and the wild mountains of his youth.

The last awakening came shortly after dawn. He sat upright, shivering. It was cold in the cave, yet outside he could see the heat quivering again. In spite of sleep and her dreams, fear was still with him. Through the hole in the cave he saw the end of all.

He struggled to his knees and stretched out his arms to the dawn burning the west; and as he did so, the silence was broken by a queer little rattle rising almost at his feet—a short, sharp warning. And the man's body stiffened—became as lifeless as the wall of the stone cave he crouched against.

Something moved in the sand a few feet away. Something glittered there—tiny twin stars.

Savage turned his head as if for some weapon of defence; and as he moved, the two glittering objects in the sand moved too, and the man's eyes slowly moved again in the direction of the thing that had shaken death in his face—death just when the craving to live had returned. Life at any price, anywhere—aye, outside in the burning sun and biting sand!

There was no escape whilst two or three feet of shining steel remained before the opening of the cave. How long, he wondered, would it lie there watching him, waiting for the slightest movement on his part, to strike?

His boots had been badly cut—one had fallen from his foot, and lay just outside the cave—his coat was off, and the shirt at his neck open. No matter where the brute struck, it would be fatal.

Savage shivered no longer; the sweat rolled down his face, his neck, his chest.

He tried to think of some means of escape. He was surprised that he did not laugh, his efforts were so pitiable. A yard or two away lay a rock; the brute might be crushed in a moment. In his pocket his revolver; the faintest movement on his part, and he would meet death.

Perhaps, when the sun rose higher, the brute would feel the delicious heat luring it out, and it would slide away, and he could escape. Already his limbs ached at the strained position he was forced to keep, and he trembled as with an ague.

He contemplated a sudden bold rush, in which he might just evade the snake. He decided to put the idea into execution: and the moments slipped away, and still he crouched against the wall of the cave, gazing on the tiny eyes fastened on his own. Reason tottered as he felt his body swaying to and fro like a gigantic pendulum. He closed his eyes, waiting for the strike.

"Guess it's up to you," his dry lips mumbled. "Can't bluff you no longer. Strike, and lemme go!"

He heard the rattle, and his body stiffened. A regular, rhythmical rattle—a sound he knew well and loved. No rattlesnake warning that, but the beat of horse's hoofs on the desert sand.

With an effort he moved his eyes from the stars in the dust and gazed through the hole out into the world. A horse was cantering towards the cañon, towards his cave, a girl swaying easily in the saddle. He saw the wind catch her hair, he saw the slim outline of an almost boyish figure.

He watched, fascinated. Would she see him—*could she see him?* No, for already the rocks hid her from sight. Horse and rider were only a few yards away.

If he shouted—*if he shouted*—that horrible strip of steel would be coiling beneath his shirt.

Only the four legs of the horse were visible now. Savage counted the seconds. The horse was passing—slowly—quickly.

Gal—lum—pher . . . gal—lum—pher . . . gal—lum—pher . . . skid-oo-oo. The old, broken boot frightened it, and the little thoroughbred shied badly.

Gal—lump . . . She had reined in; the rhythm was broken.

Savage dared not bend his head; the sweat ran in little rivers from his body now. But he saw the girl dismount, and he noticed that she did not wear spurs. That curious fact made a great impression on him.

What was she doing? Looking at his old boot? A girl of the hills—knew her business.

Gee! Now she was kneeling on the sand, *examining his trail.* It led to the cave—she followed it.

He was saved. Life was his—the sunshine, the wind, and the burning sand.

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Immovable now, as if carved from the rocks which his back pressed so fiercely.

The girl reached the opening; lower she bent, and Savage saw her face silhouetted distinctly. A deep olive skin, large, curious eyes with black level brows, an uncommonly strong chin, a nose that reminded him of Sam's sensitive velvet nostrils, mouth rather large, lips red, and arms and wrists like stems of young willows.

An hallucination—another desert mirage. A second later, and he *knew* that it was not, for the thing coiled in the sand moved.

Again the warning.

Would the girl hear and understand? His life was nothing now, save as a bulwark for hers.

Joy was his as he lurched forward to take the strike and save her—the joy he had sought so long and vainly, the joy of a dozen lives condensed into one mad moment. His life for hers—what better?

His body, stiff, refused to obey the message it received. Frantically he pressed his back against the wall and tried to pitch forward. And he heard the girl's warning voice. What music! He saw something flash in her hand as the rope of live steel rose to spring.

Thunder roared in his ears, dust spat in his face. Millions of sparks chased through the cave, and the air was alive with snakes, circling round and round. Something seized the collar of his shirt and dragged him out into the light. Then the girl's voice again, and the thud of horse's hoofs.

These last repeated over and over again, over and over again, until they became like the music of a great opera—an opera of the desert, whose orchestra was the thirsty scrub-grass, the mad cactus and palms and the stunted grass, with the wind ever singing his breathless solo.

But the girl's voice was the music that held his soul captive and prevented it escaping from his body.

III.

JIM SAVAGE weighed one hundred and seventy pounds, and Santa did not find it easy to lift him on to her horse. She accomplished the feat by persuading the well-bred Westerner to lie down; then she dragged the unconscious man across his shoulders, jerked herself into the saddle as the horse rose, and was thus able to keep her burden safely balanced.

Though the sun blistered and the dust circled high in the trail, Santa for once did not spare her horse. At a gallop she forced him towards the cañon and the violet hills; at the gallop she kept him when the scrub grew thicker, and the stunted trees rose everywhere, and giant rocks shot up out of unexpected places. The trail now wound in half-circles, once or twice doubling back on itself; the ascent, which Savage had dreamed, really commenced. Here a big tree stared drearily at its own shadow; there a bunch of sage glared grey-green, and an armful of dried bushes protruded sickly arms across a mass of broken boulders. The horse picked his way cleverly; the reins hung loosely on his neck. What little guidance he received from his mistress came through the medium of the slim limbs gently caressing him on either side.

The horse began to resent this mad hurrying home to the shack beneath the mountains; the heat was great and the dead weight of the man unusual. As if to question his mistress's actions, he slackened speed once and turned his head. He felt Santa's knees grip tightly and her little heels drive a warning. Tossing his head, he continued to gallop. He disapproved of men, especially of stray men, and the drunken variety in particular.

Presently the trail ascended in earnest. Shadows blackened the earth here and there, and trees became no longer rare. A sound of falling water singing cheerfully, and the horse pricked his ears.

Grass took the place of scrub and brush, a group of gum and eucalyptus trees beckoned to the right, and the horse left the trail. Santa spoke, and he trotted, but suddenly the rough ground changed his pace to a scramble, and the girl needed all her strength to balance her burden and herself.

High above, on a ledge of rock, stood the shanty. The shadows already hid it from the sun's rays, and a thread of water leaped from the base of the rock to the chasm below. The last few hundred yards of the ascent were precipitous, but the horse successfully fought his way to a level plateau surrounded by fir trees, an oasis in the wilderness of rock-strewn hills, completely hidden from the trail below and the mountains above—hidden from all eyes save the buzzard's or the eagle's.

Santa threw herself from the saddle, and then allowed Savage to slowly slide to the ground. She balanced his body against the horse, supporting him with her shoulder placing one limp arm around her neck. And so she dragged him into the shanty, across

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the hall to her own room, dropping him on to the cushion-strewn mattress that did duty for a bed.

A breeze blew through the long, low window, the falling waters sang a cool, sweet song, the sinking sun cast bars of gold across the sky as Santa tended her patient. Fever held him in her yellow hands. Death had followed in their trail; she knew that the white horse stood with her chestnut horse outside the open door.

But who or what this man was, she did not know or care. He was flesh and blood—that was enough. A well-built man, too. Superb health had been his. And, whatever had taken him to the cave where she had found him hiding and a prisoner, his face expressed strength of will and photographed his soul—a picture, perhaps, imperfectly developed.

Night came quickly, and ere the sun whipped the stars away, Savage slept as a child sleeps, his heart beating regularly, the fever ebbing from his veins, and the clouds lifting from his brain.

IV.

JIM was alone when consciousness returned, and he opened his eyes to Santa's room, the long, low window showing the distant mountains and the sentinel fir trees. He looked a while at the violet vista, and listened to the whisper of the waters; then he turned his eyes to the room and closed them, cursing the fever which gave him such mad dreams.

But presently he looked again — the delirium was pleasant. If it were the forerunner of death, or death itself, he were a fool not to enjoy the joke.

The room belonged to a woman. There were her brushes on the roughly-hewn table, her feminine toys—a ribbon, a kerchief, a petticoat, a pair of shoes—ridiculous things. On the walls a picture—one that held his eyes—a bookcase full of books, a gun, a rod or two, whips, riding-boots and breeches, and a jar of mountain flowers—the maddest room a fever-racking brain ever conjured.

He laughed, then fell to weaving stories of the room and its owner.

Life recommenced. Seizing an imaginary pad, supplied by fairies, he blotted out the past and started his life afresh. And so he dreamed himself asleep; and when Santa returned, he was snoring. A beautiful sound, for she realised then that she had saved his life.

Savage grinned when he awoke, because his mad dream was still unbroken. He waited for the girl to speak.

First of all she kicked off her boots, threw her hat on a peg, wiped the dust from face and hands, then dropped on to the floor beside him and smiled. The sun had only succeeded in turning her skin dark brown, failing to suck the youth or health from it; her big eyes sparkled.

"Guess you're all right at last," she said cheerily.

"I am," Savage replied emphatically, a trifle anxious as to the sound of his voice. To his surprise, it was not ghostly. "Say, where am I, and what are you?"

"You're in my shack, and I'm just a girl. What d'you think I was—a coyote?"

Savage shook his head. "'Bout last thing I remember was a coyote—had to shoot it—thirst." He shivered. "I don't want ter be remembering what's dead and gone. Jest let me go on—dreaming."

He sighed, closed his eyes for a while, and opened them wearily. "You won't go away if you can help it, will you?"

"You'll go first."

"I 'spose so," he muttered. "I ought to have gone long ago. Wonder where I'm going?"

"Back to Las Vegas."

It was a chance shot, perhaps, but it hit Savage fairly.

He remembered, shivered again, and raised himself on his elbows. "No, never there again. Look here, I've lived hard and fast, had my share of luck, and all that, played the wrong colour—lost. Guess they chucked me. But I'm not going back—never there!"

"You are," Santa said cheerfully, looking at him with big eyes brimming with dreams, "soon as I've finished with you."

"And when will that be?" The question was put fearfully.

"Maybe in a week now, maybe sooner."

Savage drew a deep breath. "Well, it'll be the longest and best dream I ever had—a week! Where'd you find me?"

"Don't you know?" Savage shook his head. "Well"—Santa smiled, rising—"don't try guessing yet. We'll have some supper now."

He watched her prepare the meal. Her beauty impressed him slowly, her splendid youth. The light on her hair was pleasant, and the curve of her limbs, the brown pillar of neck, and the slim wrists and ankles.

"Where are your folk?" he asked when the meal was ready, and he began to realise that the food was substantial—for dream food.

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Santa laughed, and Savage knew from whom the wind of the trees and the tumble of the waters had stolen their music.

corner of Heaven one day, and I come here just as often as I can."

"And other times?"

"The girl needed all her strength to balance her burden and herself."

"My folk! *La bas* somewhere"—Savage frowned—"Paris, London, New York—I don't know *which!*"

Savage smiled slowly. "'Spose you were—were created right here?"

She shook her head. "No, I found this

"I go down to my home in the city—you know—I become what they call civilised again."

They ate their meal with the orchestra of night playing soft music. Afterwards Santa talked and Savage listened. Without doubt

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she was no woman—fairy, pixie, spirit, he wondered which. Occasionally her conversation drifted around places where hot sun and biting sand and mad, crooked arms of cactus beckoned, and then fear gripped his heart, for in the fiery sands stray grains of memory lurked.

She talked of flowers and birds, of hills and valleys, of books and horses.

"I'd a horse once—Sam, I called him. He quitted, though, when he saw I played the wrong colour."

Santa nodded. "He'll come back when you play the right colour."

"I ain't ever going to play again," Savage growled.

"You are—you're going to play the right game. You haven't forgotten it, have you?"

"What game is that, anyway?"

"The game you started when you were—well, sixteen or seventeen. Try to remember."

Savage turned on his side. He felt suddenly weak, moisture in his eyes and a pain around his heart—fever returning.

"I don't want to remember. Boys are mostly fools."

"Boys are wiser than men till big folks crush the juice of their dreams through the great moral winepress."

Savage heaved a sigh. "Go on talking. I don't know what you mean, but go on talking."

Asleep or awake he did not care. The girl's voice and the night's voice and the laughing stars and the sentinel firs and the violet hills held his soul as a mother holds her child to her breast, until, ere he really slept, he longed to live again and carry the banner of his dreams back to Las Vegas.

The next day and the next passed, as dreams pass, each more vivid than the last, until, holding Santa's arm in his, Savage walked across the plateau and felt the wind in his face again and the sunshine in his eyes.

Then at last he knew that he, Jim Savage, still lived. And memory returned spasmodically, hitting him like rocks hurled from mountain tops, and he clung to the girl for support.

As each incident of his life returned, he told it her—told it with shame. But she understood. The bitterness of remembering was sweetened by the joy of this girl's understanding.

"You must know a deal about life," he whispered. "You must know 'most everything that's worth knowing. Where'd you learn?"

"Here," she replied. "Aren't you learning?"

He nodded. "But I'm frightened, too—I got to go back."

Santa nodded. "You want to go back." Savage shook his head. "You *want* to go back," she repeated firmly. "You want to be a man again—to fight, to win."

"Win what?"

"The kingdom, the power, and the glory."

"Where?"

"Here."

The fifth day and the sixth day passed, and his strength increased, and his memory. He was fighting. It was fine. He wanted to show this girl what it was to be a man.

The seventh day he insisted on riding with her down the cañon to hunt. "Guess you've got a horse you can spare?"

She took him to the stable, and Sam whinnied and rubbed his velvet nostrils against his master's face. And Savage remembered the day and night on the desert, and the cave, the snake threatening death—everything.

Everything save one thing—the worst evil that had befallen him before he rode out from Las Vegas insane. He asked her how she found Sam, and she told him of twelve hours' ride through the desert.

"I just *wanted* to find your horse—you talked about him in your sleep—and so I did find him. Anything one really wants, one obtains."

"Sure?"

"Certain."

That night, as they sat together on the verandah, watching the night, Savage told Santa that she knew everything concerning him save two things—one the evil he could not remember, and the other the good that had lately come to him.

"Can you forgive a man who has fooled and blundered as I have?" he asked. "Do you believe I can start again just as I started when I was seventeen?"

"I know you can," she answered gently. "And as to forgiveness—why, what's that got to do with me?"

Savage was silent a while. For a few moments the old belief that this was a dream threatened to overwhelm him. He stretched out his hand and laid it on Santa's hand—warm flesh and blood. Yet it made him shiver. He knew now what was inscribed on that banner he had flaunted as a boy.

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The kingdom, the power, and the glory!

"Santa, Las Vegas drove me out into the desert to make a man of me. I'll go back and prove I'm a man. But before I go, I got to say the good that's in me. I love you."

He felt her hands grow warmer, he saw the glory of the dawn in her eyes.

"And the evil—can you remember that?"

"There is no evil now," rose to his lips.

But memory hurled her last rock. It crushed him.

He drew back, huddled against the wall of the shack as he had against the cave's walls when death threatened.

This was worse than death.

Santa saw and understood. Even at that moment she could not understand. For many days she had trusted this stranger, treating him as a brother.

"Tell me."

He was silent. She crept close to him and rested her hands on his shoulders. "Tell me, brother."

He laughed. "I was half drunk. It was a wager—the vilest I made. I lost—and I paid."

"How much?" Her voice was calm and strong.

"The kingdom and the power and the glory! They bet me that! My last wager with Swift Neil—he let me have a thousand dollars to gamble with, and I was to sell myself to him, body and soul, for two years. I lost. His slave for two years, to come and go at his bidding—black his boots, maybe—and never as much as the touch of silver or the sight of gold, or speech with free men and women."

Again he laughed, and the stars hid their faces and the sun rose red over the mountains.

Then Santa rose, too, and left the room, and Savage lay staring at the wreckage.

And out of the wreckage rose temptation. It would be easy to escape—he had escaped. No one could find him here, least of all Swift Neil, his master.

The sound of horses' hoofs on the plateau outside brought him to his feet. He faced the doorway where Santa stood, the joy of life and love in his eyes. She was pale as the last departing star.

"Come," she whispered.

"Where?"

"To Las Vegas."

"Why?"

"To fight—to win."

He jeered at her. "Those fairy tales are no good now. If I go back there, you know how it'll be. I'm going to stay here."

She nodded and smiled, and then her arms were about his neck.

"Win me!"

"How?"

"By fighting at Las Vegas, by paying your debt, by starting afresh. Sam is waiting. I will ride with you to the mouth of the cañon."

He held her a moment at arm's length. "I don't understand. What will you do?"

"I shall wait. If death comes first to either of us, love will come hereafter. Dear love, fight! Be a free man—honourably free—and the kingdom and the power and the glory are ours for ever!"

He threw up his head and squared his shoulders. "Is love eternal, then?"

She raised her eyes, and he knew.

Mounting their horses, they rode down the mountain with the dawn, and where cañon met desert they parted.

"You have made a man of me," Savage whispered. "We shall meet again."

A horse's hoofs tore up the desert sand, a pillar of dust rose high, drifted over the waste of grey land, fell, and faded softly. Silence and sunshine were lords of the Nevada plains again, and one girl mistress of a world to be.

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BEASTIE.

By LAURENCE NORTH,

Author of "The Golightlys," "Impatient Griselda," etc.

EASTIE has never known the doubtful blessing of life, but, for all that, he enjoys a very real existence. Long ago, when the present scribe promised to write Beastie's Odyssey, the strange creature had already seen many vicissitudes, but it was fortunate that the history had to wait a while, for much was still in store, and the hero has passed through many surprising phases since then. His is a triumph of personality, outlasting several incarnations. For of the original substance of Beastie next to nothing remains. Yet Beastie himself persists, one and indivisible, strong in his enduring individuality, most vital in his inanimate appeal. He is one of the family. Long may he be preserved, for his loss would be irreparable—at least, to one small person.

After all this beating about the bush, it is time to come to the point and confess that Beastie is the infant Margaret's oldest and most cherished plaything—a fact of which the discerning reader has already had some inkling. In Beastie's earliest and smartest days, he was a rabbit of peculiarly knowing appearance, white-furred and bright-eyed, his attitude towards the world fixedly rampant, if the leonine attribute be permissible to a creature so gentle. But, for all his gentleness, Beastie has an air of worldly wisdom uncommon to rabbit-kind. That is half the secret of his charm. He is a philosopher among bunnies; one cannot look at him and doubt that he belongs to the Athenæum Club of Rabbit Land, where he lays down the law on turnips and green corn, and inadvertently exchanges umbrellas with bishops. So wise a creature never nibbled parsley. There must be moments when, unseen, Beastie's now limp and drooping form steals the fire of life and goes forth to seek adventures. How otherwise could he wear that look of ripe knowledge and experience?

Margaret got him before she could speak, and from the first moment he held her heart in fee. No doll ever appealed to her half so much. Without Beastie she was disconsolate. When speech came, she gave him the name that has stuck to him ever since. The child, of course, is no respecter of persons. In her affection she heaped indignities upon her uncomplaining friend. The worst was the continual chewing of his ears. With that began the decline and fall of his personal appearance. But he bore it like a hero, and, while sight remained, he looked at his tormentor calmly and benevolently out of a pair of black, beady eyes.

"Oh, my Beastie!" Margaret would say dotingly, the last thing at night, as she went to sleep hugging her treasure; and her first words at wakening were: "My Beastie—where's my dear Beastie?" A long hunt among tangled bedclothes ended in the discovery of the unfortunate philosopher, squeezed almost flat, as often as not, but still philosophic. One could fancy him quoting the rabbit's Horace—

> Though hutches tumble round mine ears,
> I, 'mid the ruins, own no fears.

As his looks declined, Beastie grew dearer and dearer to his mistress. The ears, once pricked to every alarm, yielded at last to chewing and began to droop miserably. Then the barbarian child attacked her friend's eyes. Those fascinating beads were too great a temptation for little fingers, and at last one orb went. A grotesque squint lent Beastie new charms. Singled-eyed he looked out upon the world from the doll's perambulator in which he took the air daily, or gazed along the pillow at his sleeping owner. Hard usage began to tell in other ways. It was not long before a strict sense of hygiene in obstinate grown-ups took note of Beastie's increasing blackness. He, once so fine, threatened to become disreputable, even noisome. To the wash, therefore, he was condemned once a week. Pegged up on a line by the ears, he dangled shamefully for certain hours in the wind and the sun. But

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the awful act moved Margaret not at all. Never did cruel lady of the Renaissance watch with more delight the antics of a former favourite on the gibbet.

"How funny my Beastie looks up there! Will he be dry soon?"

That was all. In due time, sometimes a little earlier, the victim was cut down and comforted with a double measure of love.

Something of Beastie's philosophy had entered into that grave infant. The wash was a necessary evil, to be accepted with humour. Very different was the case of any assault on Beastie's person by alien hands. That day when the Engineer and the Goblin, from pure wantonness—for the possession of the rabbit was nothing to them—used him as the rope in a tug-of-war, brought Margaret some moments of fearful anguish. Then, indeed, her pet was a living sufferer.

Mummy, busy elsewhere, was startled by the whirlwind entrance of a wildly weeping baby.

"Oh, my Beastie—they're killing my Beastie! Come quick! He's b'eedin' porridge!"

It was too true. Beastie's outer envelope had given way at last, and his vital sawdust, now dimly resembling porridge owing to his ablutions, had begun to exude.

The Riot Act was read, and Beastie delivered. Margaret, her sobs subsiding, stood by while the poor patient was stitched up. She brought out the doll's cradle and put him to bed. A penitent brother, seized with medical ardour, put on the paternal overcoat and silk hat, and came to prescribe. Margaret, forgetting the doctor's recent iniquities, hung upon his words, so easily does a child accept new situations. The doctor felt Beastie's pulse, sounded him with a penny trumpet held upside down, recommended perfect rest and wrote a prescription, neatly making the sign of invocation to Apollo at the beginning. He had picked up that somehow during one of his more agreeable visits to the doctor, who has him down occasionally to show him his microscope. From one of these visits he returned with a minute and fearful knowledge of the bacillus of lockjaw. That was still fresh in his memory.

"We trust," he said to the trembling Margaret, "that tetanus—lockjaw, you know, Pegs darling—will not supervene. I hope I may not have to operate," he added disingenuously, for nothing would have pleased him better. "We shall see. Good-bye. Give him his mixture every five minutes."

Then he departed to the tool-shed, where, shedding the physician for the apothecary, he compounded an abominable potion.

Marjorie, sensing comedy, took her work out into the garden and sat down a little apart to watch.

The patient, invisible save ears, nose, and the imperturbable remaining eye, lay snugly wrapt up in the cradle. Margaret fetched her little basket chair and sat down to watch. She rocked Beastie gently and crooned to him. Meanwhile, afar off, the Goblin and the physician, the latter now verging on the surgeon, had their heads together.

"But can you?" said the Goblin.

"Of course," said the Man of his Hands. "I know all about it. You remember, when Nannie was in hospital, she told us how it was done."

The allusion was to a time when Nurse had undergone a serious operation, an event which passed into an awesome legend.

The Practitioner, sure of his ground even before the next diagnosis, went about his preparations. An old and rather rickety doll's perambulator was dragged out, and on it was laid a drawing-board. Then a little folding-table was set up near the tool-shed. The Goblin produced sundry rags, and afterwards went in to hold mysterious conference with Nurse. Before long she appeared in a cap and apron.

This done, the doctor called again. Margaret watched him with her soul in her eyes. He spent a long time over his examination, took the patient's temperature, shook his head with professional gravity, and then remarked hypocritically—

"I'm sorry to say an operation will be necessary, and *at once*. Come, Nurse."

"What's an opelation?" said Margaret.

"Something to make Beastie better," replied the subtle man of science,

The infant was puzzled, but curiosity kept her from protest—besides, it was to make Beastie well.

The Goblin appeared, gravely wheeling the perambulator to the side of the cradle. Beastie was laid on the board, and the surgeon set out various bottles. Then an old handkerchief was saturated with Heaven knows what—it suggested, among other things, eau-de-Cologne—and the patient's head was wrapped up. There ensued a dramatic pause.

"That will do. He's off all right," said the doctor, with horrid cheerfulness. "Come along, Nurse. I don't think, Pegs duckling, you'd better come. It's not usual."

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"But I can't leave my dear Beastie," protested the infant, on the edge of tears.

"She's goin' to howl," said the surgical Nurse, in a hasty aside. "Best let her come. Mumsie'll stop us if Peg howls."

The doctor made a grimace and chose the least of two evils.

The procession set off for the operating theatre, the Goblin trundling the patient, the operator stalking ahead in lofty pride, the anxious relative bringing up the rear.

At the place of execution the surgeon looked round, as if he missed something.

"I say," he exclaimed, "that won't do. I'd forgotten."

He whispered to his elder sister. The Mother overheard something about "All your boy dolls—look sharp."

But the lady was obstinate. "Oh, rot!" she said. "Besides, it's too much fag. Go on—I'm getting tired of this play."

Near the operating table stood an old bench. The surgeon looked at it rather sadly. Then, not to be done, he darted into the tool-shed and reappeared with some potatoes, which he set out on the bench in a row.

"What's that for?" Margaret inquired.

"These," said the surgeon, "are the students. One can't operate properly without students." He transferred the patient to the table. "Keep the chloroform going, Sister, or he'll waken up. Now, then!"

He whipped out his pocket-knife with a flourish, and, before Margaret could utter a cry, he had ripped up Beastie's outer envelope and began to explore his interior with a skewer.

"Oo is spoilin' my Beastie!" Margaret shrieked.

"Hush," said the surgeon severely—"not a word, or he may die in my hands!"

The infant relapsed into frozen silence. The Skilled Mechanic went on. "Ha," he exclaimed, with a deep breath, "I thought so!"

The interior was not all sawdust. There were odds and ends of rag—better still, a rather lengthy piece of tape. This the surgeon pulled out slowly and carefully, to his evident satisfaction. It seemed endless, but the process was fascinating. He did not, in his professional ardour, notice how miserably flat the poor patient was growing.

The surgeon took out a pair of scissors and gravely snipped off a large portion of the tape. It seemed that his work was done. But, alas, no! His eagle eye had detected some other lesion. He went to work again, breathing harder. It was a tough complication evidently, but at last he removed a small object like a bellows. It was Beastie's squeaker. He held it out to the Nurse, while his dexterous finger and thumb made the contrivance speak.

"I never knew before how it worked," he said triumphantly. "If you let me keep it, Peglet, I won't charge anything for this operation. What—you're not going to cry, are you? Beastie will be a lot better without it, duckling. He would never get well with it in."

The hapless infant bowed to the superior wisdom. Surgeon and Nurse went to work with needle and thread, and the Nurse trundled a sadly dilapidated Beastie back to the cradle.

"Gentlemen," said the surgeon, turning to the potatoes, "it was touch and go, but I have pulled it off. With care the patient will do well. I may say I have never had a more anxious moment."

He put the squeaker into his pocket and, holding it there, retired from practice, making mysterious music as he went.

For the rest of the day Margaret nursed her charge patiently, and, as usual, took him to bed with her. Next morning he was a dismal spectacle. The surgeon's stitches had been none of the best. A great deal of the remaining sawdust had flown away. Like the woman who came before Solomon for judgment, Margaret had overlaid her infant in the night. Beastie's charms were now in profile, for the most part. Once of a round, fair plumpness, he had come to resemble a pancake.

But the new phase bred new delight. Instead of grieving over Beastie's reduced circumstances, the infant only took him more warmly to her heart. She tried once or twice to set him upright. Beastie collapsed, limp and abject, flinging one pitiful eye to the heavens. The dying pig sold by street hawkers was no match for this comicality. Margaret had found a new joy. Wherever she went, her familiar went also. He made a shift to sit beside her at meals, sometimes on the table itself. He shared in everything, even to earthy stains when Margaret made mud-pies. Once when the two less illiterate elder children realised the Mad Hatters' tea-party, Beastie went one better than the original rabbit, and was thrust head, body, and legs into the tea-pot. After that his colour became utterly nondescript, and he lost his remaining eye.

"Poor blind Beastie!" said sympathetic Margaret. Then a queer, childish inversion

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occurred to her. "I'll need to lead oo about by a string"

So the rag—for to that Beastie had come at length—was diligently pulled about everywhere at Margaret's heels. More than ever did he need his weekly wash, although it was now a question how much longer he would hold together. Sorely frayed and utterly infirm, he still claimed affection and allegiance.

Then on a black day he disappeared. The child was disconsolate, and never ceased to ask for her idol. The house was searched again and again without success. At last it was supposed that Beastie had fallen by the wayside when he was out for a drive. Margaret protested that he had not, and every night at bed-time she remembered the wanderer. A new bunny was given to her, but somehow he was not Beastie. Grown-ups abandoned hope, and wondered when the child would forget her queer playmate, for he was far more than a play*thing*.

"This the surgeon pulled out slowly and carefully, to his evident satisfaction. It seemed endless, but the process was fascinating."

Weeks passed away, and, but for Margaret's importunate inquiries, Beastie would have been forgotten. Then by happy chance

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someone opened a drawer that is seldom used. There lay the truant. How he got hidden nobody could tell, for no one in the house had shut him up. The mystery, however, simple enough like so many mysteries, was explained in due course. By a curious irony, Margaret's dearest friend, outside the family, was to blame. This lady had been moved, during a visit, to take upon herself the tidying up of the night nursery—a pious act warranted by her former position in the household—and in her energy, without reflecting on the enormity and possible consequences of her act, she had swept Beastie into limbo. Hence these tears.

Margaret's joy on recovering her treasure was delirious. Anxious parents rushed upstairs to know the reason of the shrieks. The Engineer hinted that it was a fitting occasion for a few fireworks, but no attention was paid to his disinterested desires.

The double measure of attention which Beastie now received wore him exceedingly threadbare. It seemed as if nothing could save him. Only an expert eye could have told what he had been originally. Then, hey presto! human genius in the person of a long-suffering Nannie recalled him from the very verge of annihilation. The poor worn, unseaworthy integument was covered, as furniture is covered, with a white cotton envelope exactly mimicking the shape of that within. Into this cover new stuffing, somewhat amateurish and irregular, was introduced, the ears stood stiff again, and the eyes were replaced by two impressive boot-buttons. A red ribbon about Beastie's neck made him a veritable buck. True, his unrelieved white was a little ghastly, and his general outline recalled the mummified cats of Egypt; but no matter. He started auspiciously on his new career, and as yet, luckier than King John, he has lost nothing in the wash.

Margaret, in the fullness of time, has begun to take an interest in the popular heroes of the books read to her. She has much to say of certain persons she calls the F'opsy Bunnies and Peeta and Benjie. With these intelligent people, some of whom had strange adventures in the matter of clothing, she seems to connect the reincarnated Beastie. And the proof thereof is the following. The other day an Unwise Parent picked up from the lawn something he took to be an unsightly rag. He was about to speak winged words, when he looked closer. The thing, though shapeless enough, had design of a sort. There was no mistaking it. About its white, lampshade-like spread went a grotesque band of black crêpe. The giant stitching proclaimed the maker.

"Oh, please, sir," said Nannie, jealously reclaiming the oddity, "I'll take charge of that. It's the petticoat Miss Peggy has just made for Beastie."

ET EGO IN ARCADIA.

ON life's rough voyage, when I am sad,
And others happy round I see,
I lay this unction to my soul:
"I, too, have been in Arcady."

But when my heart is glad and gay,
And fortune brightly smiles on me,
Of other folks less blest I ask:
"Hast never been in Arcady?"

For each man's life has golden hours,
And golden should their memory be.
Let no one who has loved forget
He, too, has been in Arcady.

G. F. TURNER.

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THE NIGHT OF THE PARTY.

By T. D. MAXWELL.

T was a *very* select party. Mr. Ojo, indeed, went so far as to say it was "verily a party carry," and he ought to know, for he had once been steward to a lieutenant-governor who was a keen bridge player, and whose *parties carrées* were, of course, very exclusive. Possibly it was one—at all events, in the sense in which Mr. Ojo understood, or didn't understand, the term. Anyway, it was very cosmopolitan and very heterogeneous; but then that is only to be expected in the Cotton Coast Colony, and especially at Anani, its capital, whither drift all sorts and conditions of people from every other West African colony in search of a more or less honest livelihood.

The host was Mr. Herberte-Smith—with an "e" and a hyphen—a fairly successful trader from the Gold Coast, a prop of one of the local mission societies, and admittedly a very cultivated gentleman indeed, though he did seem to find his clothes uncomfortably warm and European. The duties of hostess devolved upon Mrs. Herberte-Smith, a plump young woman in voluminous calico. Mr. Herberte-Smith's brother was also there, a fat, not bad-looking youth, who combined the apparently incongruous professions of photographer and butcher, and who had the gumption still to bear his native name, Kudjo, and to wear, over a suit of flamboyant pyjamas, his native dress, a long, flowing, graceful garment, half smock, half kimono. Another guest was Abel Earl—His Royal Highness Prince Abel Earl, he styled himself, an Anani chiefling, who had once been taken to England, and whose head was still swollen with English air and pseudo-English airs. He was a puffy and rather pathetically nondescript hobbledehoy, neither native enough to be wholesomely respectable, nor Europeanised enough to be wholly odious. His dress, like himself, was neither one thing nor the other, and quite impossible as either, and his odd appearance was all the odder for a pair of large green goggles which he wore, not because they were necessary, but because he had bought them cheap at a recent sale. There were also present the Ojos—the lieutenant-governor's ex-steward, now a Government contractor—his wife and sister, who all hailed from somewhere down the coast; the Rupert P. Randolphs—a pair of anæmic little persons from the free and independent negro republic of Liberia, whose bad manners and amazing ultra-American accent insistently proclaimed their nationality, and, on the analogy of another party, the Grand Panjandrum himself, in the shape of Sergeant Turner, of the Cotton Coast Constabulary, a stout Sierra Leonian, who, having settled in Anani many years before, had there risen to the giddy height of a sergeantcy in the local police, and who was commonly and probably correctly reported to know enough about his Anani friends and acquaintances to hang them all twice over. He was a bombastic old thing, very uncouth, very large, very full of the dignity of his official position, and, in public, very weighed down with the cares of Empire, an affectation which created awe and amusement in about equal proportions amongst his inferiors and superiors respectively, all of whom, it was whispered, would have been genuinely glad to be rid of him, for he was notoriously, but never quite provably, amenable to bribery, and that on a somewhat exorbitant scale.

The party went very well indeed when once everybody's initial shyness had evaporated. Mr. Herberte-Smith was the proud possessor of a harmonium, and Mr. Ojo had brought his concertina, so they all sang several hymns, very loud, in different times and several times over, which was very nice and roused them all to a high pitch of excitement.

Betweenwhiles they quaffed from a limited quantity of thick and garish glasses an unlimited quantity of sherbert, lemonade, orangeade, and other strange mixtures, not the least strange of which was the most popular, and consisted of tinned milk and tepid water stirred with much brown sugar into

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the consistency of thin treacle. Occasionally they paused for a few minutes and exchanged a little light persiflage. Their shafts of wit might well have made a hippopotamus wince, but apparently everyone thought them perfectly innocuous, for they were delivered and received with loud-voiced laughter, while platefuls of biscuits of a sort locally made, and of several sorts imported, were being nibbled and munched into extinction. During one of the intervals the harmonium was made to emit a polka—not very successfully, perhaps, for it was a tired, wheezy old thing, with certain of its notes exceedingly uncertain.

To this danced Abel Earl—a *pas seul*, of course; to dance with a lady is not at all correct in Anani upper circles—while the others clapped their hands and whooped in, or out of, time.

The subsequent laughter and compliments had barely subsided into the silence that precedes a fresh suggestion, when Sergeant Turner startled everybody by a sudden "Ha!" and the assumption of his most impenetrably official manner.

"Drumming!" he exclaimed, his hand curved to his ear, every muscle on his face strained and tense.

"Drumming?" echoed his puzzled companions.

"What! You know not the new by-law?" he asked in pained amazement. "Suggested into the Colony from *my* suggestion—mine!" He expanded and then thumped his chest. "'Whoever beats any drum, tom-tom, gong, or any other instrument after 8 p.m.,'" he quoted grandiloquently, "'without having first obtained a written permit from the Inspector of Police, shall be liable to a fine not excee——'"

"Tchi!" interjected Mr. Herberte-Smith, with a wistful glance at his harmonium. "'Any other instrument!' Hah!"

"But it says 'Whoever *beats*.' A harmonium and a concertina is not for beating, and is therefore excused from the meaning of the Act." Mr. Ojo had sandwiched an apparently not unprofitable year as a lawyer's clerk between his stewardship and his present profession.

"'M, yes," said Sergeant Turner judicially. "That point will have to be argued. But that noise"—again he curved his hand to his ear—"is tom-toms. And no one has a permit to beat tom-toms for to-night, that I know!"

"It is in my compound!" Abel Earl interpolated with a nervous giggle. "My boys are making a play, but I did not know."

"Ignorance of a by-law excuseth nobody," pronounced Sergeant Turner platitudinously.

"Never mind O!" said his host with some adroitness. "To-night is a holiday for you. Let us be jolly. A holiday is a jolly day. Ha, ha!" He laughed fatuously. "No doubt you have ordered to your many inferior officers the duty to arrest the transgressors. Will you take another lemonade?"

"'M, yes," replied the great man, graciously mollified and condescending to be this-worldly once more.

"And now let us once again tune up," suggested one of the party.

So again they all hymn-bawled for some minutes, while the concertina and harmonium groaned and wailed, poor things, as if they were veritably and indeed being beaten within the meaning of the Act.

After the subsequent pause, biscuits, and drinks, Mrs. Ojo was prevailed upon to dance a valse. This she did to the harmonium and the general delight, though—or perhaps because—her performance was far more like the aboriginal dances of her ancestresses than any valse yet dreamed of. Then Mr. Ojo was pressed to "improvise," which, after a little bashful delay, he proceeded to do.

In spite of a generation or two of a too hastily assimilated civilisation, the majority of West Africans retain a very large share of hereditary failings—in too many cases Europeanised and developed into vices—and a less obvious but fairly large share of hereditary gifts. None of these is more interesting and, as a rule, more thoroughly harmless than the gift of improvisation. Without any preparation other than the excitement so easily engendered in him by society and noise, many a negro will describe or caricature in words that have cadence, if not scansion, his immediate surroundings, or else will make very apt comments on current events in a loud and not entirely tuneless chant, to which his companions will from time to time contribute something in the nature of a chorus. Culture, education, and trouser-wearing had, however, unfortunately been too much for Mr. Ojo. They had entirely robbed his performance of the artlessness, humour, good humour, and charm of its prototypes—the impromptu epic songs bawled by unsophisticated savages in the depths of primeval forests—and had, indeed, left little else than the noise to which they

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superadded some misunderstood Hebrew imagery borrowed from cheap hymnologies. Moreover, the English language—the only one all his hearers could comprehend—does not lend itself to anything so entirely indigenous. But to them apparently his antics were not without merit. The whole thing certainly went with a swing. It gave an admirable opportunity for making a lot of unnecessary noise, and at all events it started off by being a great success.

"Oh! Ho! Mista Herberte-Smith is a ver' fine man!" he began.

"Ver' fine man! Yow! How!" echoed his fellow-guests.

"He does give us all a very fine time truly!"

"Time truly! Yow! How!"

"And Mrs. Clementina Herberte-Smith is a very beautiful indeed lady!"

"Indeed lady! Yow! How!"

"And her eyes are like a pomegranate's!"

"Yow! How!"

"And Mrs. Clementina Herberte-Smith hath hair like a cedar of Lebanon!"

"She bear leavening! Yow! How!"

"'You liar!'"

"Which groweth on green pastures besides the unrippled liquidities!"

"Oh! Ho! Ho! Oh!"

"And Mr. Kudjo—he is a ver' fine gentleman also!"

"Also! Yow! How!"

"He can take a man to the likeness, and he can take a goat to the slaughter, and both will be very good!"

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"Ho! Oh!"

"And we are all having a quite good time!" he shouted, after some personalities and generalities.

"Yow! How!"

"All but the Prince—Prince Abel Earl—who is indeed in fear!"

"In fear! Yow! How!" howled everybody except his puffy Royal Highness, who was wondering what was coming next.

"For Sergeant Turner hath heard his drums!"

"Drum! Yum!" mimicked the chorus—"aped" would perhaps be too pertinent a word.

"And now that drumming is prohibited!"

"'Hibited! Yow! How!"

"Prince Abel Earl will be cast into gaol!"

"Oh! Ho!"

"By Sergeant Turner of our ver' good indeed police force!"

"Ha! Ah!"

"And all Prince Abel Earl's hair will be cut off, and he will be made to wash with soap, and to work in the hot sun!"

His Royal Highness smiled at the bare suggestion of such treatment, blissfully ignorant of how salutary—even sanitary—it would obviously be for him.

"Unless he will consent to pay to Sergeant Turner fifteen bottles of beer, one hogshead of tobacco, and five pounds cash money!"

"Ha!" Sergeant Turner anticipated the chorus this time, jumping up and thumping down upon the table a resonant lemonade bottle.

"Ha!" Again he thumped, snorted, and growled.

There was an awkward silence. Everyone present was aware that Mr. Ojo had, with ineffable tactlessness, said the very thing he ought not to have, for Sergeant Turner had only recently emerged—with a verdict of the nature of 'Not Guilty, but don't do it again"—from a *cause célèbre*, in which it had been alleged he had accepted precisely the bribe which Mr. Ojo had detailed.

"Ha!" he repeated a third time. Then: "Mr. Ojo," he thundered, "you traduce me! You are a bushman!"

"I do not traduce you, my fren'," retorted Mr. Ojo, still in the sing-song voice of the improvisation. "And nor am I a bushman, but of a place so good as you come from. I was but being a little humorous!"

"You lie!" shouted Sergeant Turner, with unintentional truth. "You traduce me! And you would make this a matter of racial prejudice! Yah!" He shook his fist at him, and then repeated: "You lie!"

Mr. Ojo stood up. His antagonist was well out of reach, so, looking almost brave and quite defiant, he exclaimed, "Pah!" loudly, and clattered his concertina down on to the table.

"Wow!" squealed Miss Ojo, evidently alarmed at her brother's attitude.

"Kwah!" quacked Mrs. Herberte-Smith, slapping her.

"Tchah!" ejaculated Mr. Ojo, rounding on Mrs. Herberte-Smith, very brave in very truth this time. "You flog my sister? What for? Eh?"

"She is a fool," explained that lady—"she cried out!"

"Cried out!" echoed Mr. Ojo. "Cried out! Madam!"

"Ha! You hear him! He abuse my wife!" screamed Mr. Herberte-Smith.

"You lie!" retorted Mr. Ojo.

"I no lie! Mr. Randolph, do not hold me!"

Thereupon ensued a scene which was subsequently investigated in the police court, where there were very varying accounts of what did happen. To quote from the graphic narrative given by Mr. Herberte-Smith in the witness-box—a spot which calls forth all the refinements of expression, to say nothing of imagination, of which gentlemen of his class are capable—

"So Mr. Ojo he abuse my wife, Mrs. Clementina. He used several strong languages to her and boxed her face. This I did not quite like, so I spake unto him, saying: 'Mr. Ojo, why do you so?' Then he fisted me upon the nostril, and consequently accepted a struck upon the tooth. Meanwhile my wife, Mrs. Herberte-Smith, and Miss Ojo—oh, no, they did not fight!—merely they scrambled themselves, and at this I said, 'Stop!' But they did not agree, and so I said, 'Ha, I go make you stop one time!' And then Miss Ojo she blew my nose, two blows, and most severely!"

His statement was borne out so far as outward appearances went, for his nose did look very bulgy. Mr. Ojo seemed all lips and toothlessness, and his sister's knuckles were skinned. But this is anticipatory and possibly *ex parte*.

Anyway, whatever did happen gave ample opportunity—possibly even excuse—for some loud screeches on the part of the women, and a vivacious exchange of vituperation between them. The two Randolphs shrank into a corner and wistfully eyed the door, for the scene of action lay between them and it. Sergeant Turner, at the first sign of trouble,

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had disappeared, fulminating fearful threats against everyone in general and Mr. Ojo in particular. His Royal Highness, valorously discreet, had also vanished.

In a very few minutes, before even quite all the neighbours had collected to inquire into the meaning of the hullabaloo, Sergeant Turner returned. He stood at, but outside, the door, severely, even snappishly, official. Two stalwart policemen, whom he had raised from somewhere, he dramatically ordered to enter the house and to arrest Messrs. Herberte-Smith and Ojo for "Hah—er—um—beating other instruments without a permit!"

The policemen obeyed, and first separated and then seized the protagonists. The din was deafening. Messrs. Ojo and Herberte-Smith hurled epithets at each other across the table; the latter emphasised his by repeatedly banging Sergeant Turner's resonant lemonade bottle on to a tin tray, while the strength of Mr. Ojo's language all but compensated for his having no similar means of underlining it.

Almost immediately the two stalwart policemen were also bellowing reverberatingly, for the women, forgetting their own little differences, had gone for them, and were busy scratching, tearing, crying, spitting, swearing. Miss Ojo bit one of the arms of the law in the leg, and protested volubly when she had her ears cuffed. Sergeant Turner made a most abominable noise at the door, urging everyone simultaneously, under pain of fearful penalties, to go on, to leave off, to come out, to go in. The end of it all was that, after endless blasts had been blown on strident police whistles, several more policemen materialised, and the neighbours had the satisfaction of seeing the Herberte-Smith *ménage* and their guests proceeding in procession, and handcuffs, to the police-station.

But that wasn't quite the end of it, after all. For the next morning, in the court, the resident magistrate investigated the charge preferred against the prisoners under the new by-law, and managed to elicit the more or less true facts of the case. The others, sadly battered, were all discharged, but Sergeant Turner had a public talking to that somewhat pricked the bubble of his pride.

But, of course, he did not retire. That class of man never does, even on the West Coast. He is still going strong, and makes a large income over and above his official salary. However, as Mr. Ojo puts it, "among the coterie of friendliness" of himself and Mr. Herberte-Smith, Sergeant Turner "is not now a person of gratis"—in fact, his presence is no longer considered indispensable to make "a party carry."

SUMMER SIGNS.

A HAZE of heat on the chalk-scarred hill,
A hum of vagabond bees,
A carpet of thyme and tormentil,
A swallow skimming above the rill,
A hammock between the trees.

A film of gnats, pulsating high—
Elastic spiral skein—
A brazen round of turquoise sky,
A wandering whiff of "cherry-pie,"
A hay-cart in the lane.

A passing plume of wayside dust,
A whitethroat on the thorn,
A tender, velvet-fingered gust,
A silver billow lightly thrust
Across the growing corn.

JESSIE POPE.

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A DIGGER OF TUBES.

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS,

Author of "Neighbours Unknown," "The House in the Water," "Kings in Exile," etc.

FORCED out of his old dwelling, which had been both commodious and retired, Hackee, the striped chipmunk, moved indignantly over to the next hillside, and chose a site for his new home near the south face of the dilapidated stone wall which separated the beech wood from the upland pasture.

He had had a peculiarly exasperating experience. Quite by accident, an ill-conditioned but obstinate mongrel terrier from the farm down in the valley had found the narrow entrance to his underground abode, and had started to dig him out. This, of course, was a vain undertaking for any dog, for not only was the entrance tube several yards in length and leading a good three feet below the surface, but the central chamber, or dwelling proper, had another exit, yards away, by which Hackee had come out at his leisure, to perch on a near-by fence-rail and shriek chattering curses at the foolish dog. Having a strain of dachshund among the many which went to his pedigree, the terrier had really done a fine piece of burrowing before he realised the futility of his efforts, and backed out of the hole, with eyes and fur full of dirt, to give ear to Hackee's shrill insults, and trot off with assumed indifference in search of some more advantageous enterprise.

This had been late in the afternoon. On the edge of evening, a family of skunks had come by, and had at once adopted the roomy burrow which the terrier had excavated for them. Lazy burrowers themselves, the skunks were no fools. They knew how to profit by a good thing when it came their way. They had continued the work of the dog till they reached Hackee's central chamber. To Hackee's voluble and stuttering wrath, they had taken possession of it at once, enlarging it to suit their dimensions. They were certainly no company for a chipmunk. There was nothing for it but to yield place to these lazy but formidable invaders. Hackee and his whole family had taken themselves off, stealing through the violet dusk with a silent diffidence quite unlike their chattering daylight audacity. They knew that the dusk was peculiarly dangerous for them; so they had scattered at once, seeking refuge in the burrows of friendly neighbours, or in nooks which their daylight wanderings had revealed to them. It had been a nerve-trying night for Hackee, trembling in a hastily-enlarged mouse-hole dangerously near the fox-and-weasel-haunted surface. As soon as the full pink tide of sunrise had driven the night prowlers to their dens, he had set himself to the securing of new quarters. For none knew better than he that, to a ground-squirrel with no underground retreat, this sunny hillside, these cheerful, tranquil beech woods, these open pastures with their calm-eyed cattle, were a region of imminent and deadly hazard.

Pending a decision as to the exact spot where he would begin to sink his tunnel, Hackee kept along the old stone wall, because, with its chinks and crannies, it was more likely than any other path to offer him a hiding-place in case of emergency. In the early sunshine there were many other chipmunks abroad, out for their morning sip of dew. They were playing or foraging among the leaves, racing in utter abandon of mirth up and down the old wall, or sitting up alertly to chirp and chatter to each other their satisfaction at the promise of a fine day. But Hackee felt himself quite alone among them. He knew that each of them had a safe burrow close at hand. He had no chattering or chirping to do. He was a thing apart, a chipmunk without a hole. And all his wits were anxiously, concentratedly, on the alert against the perils which he knew might assail him from earth or sky at any instant.

He was not even hungry, for the moment, because his anxiety was so absorbing. Therefore it was that he, being the most vigilant,

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was first to catch sight of a pigeon-hawk which came stealthily through the branches of a great birch tree near the wall, and dropped like a fly-catcher in the hope of capturing one of the morning revellers. But Hackee's piercing chirrup of alarm, ere he whisked into a crevice, had been enough. Every chipmunk heard, and dodged with a celerity which even that swift hawk could not match. The alarm cry passed the length of the wall. The hawk pounced this way and that, zigzagging with a speed to confuse the eye. But not a chipmunk could he catch; and presently, in the sulks, he sailed off to try his luck with less nimble game.

When he was gone, Hackee whisked out from between the stones, ran on some fifty feet further, and stopped to peer about him carefully. This seemed a likely spot for his purpose, and it was not overcrowded. On the pasture side of the wall a big chipmunk came out from a hole about three feet distant, whisked up the stones, and scolded insolently at the stranger. But Hackee was not insulted. He *was* a stranger, and he knew he must take the consequences. He proposed to get over being a stranger just as quickly as possible, and to this end he decided to establish himself just opposite his insulter, on the other side of the stone wall. Here the beech trees were scattered, and the sward was close and firm, such as he loved, and the autumn sunlight lay warm under the wall.

Some three or four feet from the wall he marked a spreading, prickly bush of juniper, under which, as he calculated, he might begin his digging operations without much fear of interruption. All seemed secure. No hawk or fox was to be seen. The red squirrels and the blue-jays wrangled merrily and carelessly in the trees—a sure sign that there was no marauder about. Along the wall and on the close, gossamery turf at either side, other chipmunks gambolled or foraged or scratched at the sod with their clever little hand-like paws. And a soft, irregular *tonk-tink*, *tonka-tink*, *tonkle* came from the line of red-and-white cows loitering up to the pasture from the milking-shed.

Hackee gave a chirrup of satisfaction, and was on the very point of jumping down from the wall, when a piercing chirr of alarm stiffened him to stone. Everywhere, on the instant, he saw chipmunk after chipmunk flash frantically to its hole, shrieking the great danger signal as it vanished.

For half a second Hackee's heart stood still, for this, according to the signals, was one of the most dreaded enemies of his tribe—a weasel. From this enemy, a swift pursuer and a tireless, implacable tracker, there was but one safe refuge—the chipmunk's hole, too narrow at the entrance for a weasel to squeeze himself into. And Hackee had no hole to take refuge in. He knew that he would be smelt out immediately if he tried to hide in some cranny of the wall. For some precious moments he stood there alone in the perilous world, his sharp stripes of black and cream vivid on the foxy red of his cheeks and sides. Suddenly the weasel slipped into view, emerging upon the top of the wall, a long, low, sinuous, deadly apparition, with a vicious, pointed face and cruel eyes. He was not more than ten feet away.

Hackee came to himself. He bounded into the air as if galvanised, came down on the pasture side of the wall, and slipped like an eel down into the burrow of the stranger chipmunk. The weasel was so close at his twinkling heels that Hackee heard the snap of jaws just behind the tip of his tail.

Exasperated at this escape when he had felt sure of an easy kill, the weasel strove, with a snarl, to force his triangular head down the narrow entrance. As he knew, however, from many a previous effort, this was a waste of time. He presently gave it up, and darted off on the trail of a rabbit which was unlucky enough to go hopping by at that moment.

Hackee knew well enough that, as a stranger to the burrow, and especially as an invader from another colony, he need by no means look for a welcome in his forced refuge. He kept near the entrance, therefore, trembling and making himself small, and hoping that the proprietor would not appear. But it was a vain hope. Within a half minute the proprietor did appear, and rushed at Hackee open-mouthed with a most inhospitable squeal. Hackee understood very well that etiquette required him to withdraw from that hole at once. But etiquette had little concern for him so long as he thought the weasel might be waiting outside. He met the attack with the courage of necessity, and for a few seconds the narrow confines of the tube were filled with chirrups and squeals and flying foxy fur.

Suddenly the proprietor, indignant at this refusal of Hackee's to go out and feed the foe, withdrew to seek reinforcements. Hackee understood what his withdrawal meant. He had no wish to fight the whole family. Slipping back to the entrance, he

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stuck the very tip of his nose out and sniffed. The taint of weasel was on the air, but it was certainly disappearing. Very cautiously he put his whole head out and peered around with keen, wary eyes. The weasel was nowhere in sight. For a little he waited there, half in and half out. Then came a scurrying of feet behind him in the depths of the burrow. He darted forth discreetly and whisked into a hole in the wall. The next moment the inhospitable household came forth one by one, and began chattering uncomplimentary things about him, which he did not think it worth his while replying to. Slyly peering forth with one eye from his hiding-place, he noticed that all this chatter failed to bring back the weasel. This being proof enough that the coast was now clear, he whisked out, jumped over the wall, and under the shelter of the juniper bush where he proposed to have his front door.

He began by digging a round hole, perhaps three-quarters of an inch in diameter. With sharp, jerky motions he packed the edges hard and firm, till the diameter was enlarged to a full inch. The earth, every morsel of it, he carried off in his capacious cheek pouches—which stretched far back under the loose skin of his neck—to empty it under another bush half a dozen yards away. He was much too wary to leave the fresh earth, to betray him, on the grass beside the entrance; and, moreover, he was too cunning to leave any trail between this dumping-ground and his place of operations. He made the journey to and fro by great leaps, swerving erratically now to one side, now to the other.

The entrance looked hardly wide enough to admit his head. But that, he knew, was sufficient; for where his head could go through, there could go through also his whole lithe body, which, for all its strength, was as supple almost as a glove. At a depth of less than an inch, however, he began to enlarge the shaft gradually. He worked with a nervous, jerky vehemence. Every half minute he would back out and lift his head—whiskers, forehead, and ears covered with earth—to take a swift look about and assure himself that no enemies were approaching. And his trips to the other bush, his dumping-ground, took place with amazing frequency, so resolute was he that not a grain of new soil should remain beside his doorway.

The shaft which Hackee was digging so assiduously led straight downward. At a depth of four or five inches its diameter was sufficient for him to turn around in it comfortably. At this diameter he kept it. He could now work with more security and satisfaction, because, being completely hidden, he was not compelled to look about him for enemies every half minute. Turning himself round and round, he packed the walls of the shaft hard as he went, and so reduced considerably the number of his trips to the dumping-ground.

Straight downward the strenuous digger sank his shaft through the light soil to a depth of nearly four feet. Then he turned at an abrupt angle, and began running his tube diagonally, with a gentle upward slope, towards the stone wall. But by this time he had done so much excavation that he felt the need of finding a new dumping-ground, it being against his doctrine to make any of his operations too conspicuous. Moreover, having now a refuge, a place that he could call his own, however unfinished, he began to realise that he was hungry. Such a bundle of energy and fiery nerves as a chipmunk cannot go long without feeding his forces.

Whisking forth from his hole, he sprang to the wall, ran up it, and perched himself on its highest stone to look about. He sat up now with a confident flirt of his tail, chattered a defiant proclamation of proprietorship, and proceeded to make a hasty but necessary toilet, combing the earth from his ears and fur. Several other chipmunks, belonging to the immediate neighbourhood, eyed him doubtfully, as if half inclined to combine and drive him away. But his assured air had its effect, and he was not interfered with.

His toilet accomplished, he sprang down again from the wall and began rummaging for nuts among the leaves beneath the nearest tree. But this was ground that had evidently been well gone over. He went on deeper into the grove. It was a pleasant place for his foraging. The bland autumn sunlight came sifting down through the browning leaves. There was no wind, but the branches were gay with screaming blue-jays and chirring, jibing red-squirrels; and from time to time two or three nuts would come pattering down, either dropping of their own ripeness, or jarred off by the tree-top revellers. Hackee was not long in making his meal; and then, being ever a provident soul, he began to cram his cheek-pouches.

While he was thus occupied, a trim

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moose-bird bounced down hard upon the leaves a few feet ahead of him, scrutinised him with bright, impudent eyes, squawked harshly, and finally made a rush at him with open beak and lifted wings. But Hackee knew the moose-bird for a mischievous bluffer and practical joker, and he carelessly went on gathering nuts.

For a few seconds the fantastic bird danced about him, getting more and more excited at finding herself ignored. It looked as if she might almost work herself up to the supreme audacity of tweaking the busy forager's tail. But suddenly there came a scream of warning from the sentinel blue-jay in a near-by tree-top. It was taken up on the instant by a chorus of shrill voices. The moose-bird flew up to a convenient branch, and Hackee, thinking it might be a hawk that was coming, whisked under a root and peered forth anxiously.

There was no sign of a hawk; but presently he made out two blue-jays, in the next tree, peering and scolding down at something on the ground. Their accents told him it was a fox. If so, this hiding under the root was no place for him. Slipping around the trunk, in the hope of putting it between himself and the enemy's eye, he made a dart for the wall. But the fox saw him and gave chase.

It was a desperate race, but Hackee won. He whisked down into his hole just as the fox arrived. At the foot of the shaft, however, he crouched trembling. He had forgotten till now that the unfinished tube might not be a refuge, but a trap. He knew that the fox was a good digger. His heart thumped wildly, and he crowded himself into the beginning of the level gallery, fearing lest the fox should look down and perceive his predicament.

If the fox had been young and ignorant, or excitable enough to indulge in apparently futile effort, Hackee's career would have come to an end at this point. But, happily for him, this fox was a wise one. He knew that chipmunks not only had deep and elaborate burrows, but also that they always dug them with more than one exit. How was he to guess that this case was the one exception in a thousand instances? He blinked shrewdly, threw a quick, sharp glance about to see if he might not snap up the fugitive in the act of emerging from some back-door, and then went trotting off indifferently down along the wall, pouncing on the fat locusts as he went.

As soon as Hackee had recovered his composure, he fell again to his digging, and soon had his level tube advanced a couple of feet. According to the plan which he was carrying in his capable little brain, the central chamber, or main habitation, was to come directly under the wall; and then, for the better baffling of all kinds of enemies, the second entrance was to be on the other side of the wall, in the pasture field. But by this time he was once more hungry. And now he remembered the stores which had been left behind in the old burrow. Some of them, doubtless, being in narrow side galleries, would be well away from the intruding skunks, who had no interest, moreover, in the nuts and grains and roots which make up chipmunks' hoard. He hoped to be able to come at these treasures, by a little tunnelling, without being brought into contact with the objectionable usurpers.

Reaching the old home and slipping in by the back door, he found that several other members of his household had anticipated him. They had stopped up the back exit a little way from the central chamber, thus cutting themselves off from the skunk family, and they were now busily engaged in feasting on the accumulated stores. Hackee followed their example till his own hunger was satisfied, and then lured them back, each with crammed pouches, to the new home beside the stone wall, where they all fell to with a zest at the work of excavating.

In two or three days the new home was finished, and all the accessible stores from the old place safely removed to it. The main tube, from the original entrance shaft, ran on a gentle upward slope for a distance of some seven or eight feet to the central chamber, the real dwelling of the family. This chamber, perhaps a couple of feet in length, but considerably less in width, and nearly a foot high to the centre of its arched ceiling, was spread with a thick layer of the finest and silkiest of dry grasses. It lay exactly beneath the stone wall. Off it led several short storage galleries, to be enlarged or duplicated as the accumulation of stores might call for. Another tube, five or six feet long and slanting slightly downward, was run from the rear of the living-room, and terminated in a second perpendicular shaft similar to the first. The top of this shaft was in the open pasture on the other side of the wall, and depended for its privacy on the short grasses fringing its tiny entrance.

Thus comfortably established, Hackee and his diminished household—for several of the family had meanwhile settled themselves

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elsewhere—slipped without further difficulty into the life of their new neighbourhood. The chipmunks being a friendly folk, there was no more hostility shown to the newcomers, who now took their part as a matter of course in the gambols among the dry leaves and in the chattering conversations which sometimes went on interminably through the long, drowsy afternoons. Nuts were abundant that autumn, so the supplies in the storage galleries increased till there was no fear of a winter scarcity. And to vary the diet there was a neglected apple orchard a little way down the hillside, while big brown locusts and late grasshoppers were still abundant.

But Hackee, having once been singled out by the wild wood Fates for discipline, was not to be suffered to slip into his peaceful winter sleep without further trials. One day two boys and a dog appeared, with apparently nothing better to do than throw stones at chipmunks. In spite of this, the boys, not having guns, were regarded as harmless, it being a poor chipmunk that couldn't dodge a stone. But the dog—that was another matter. Dogs might dig and damage good front doors. There was a general chorus of alarm signals, and most of the chipmunks, including Hackee himself, disappeared into their burrows.

The two boys sat on the wall and began to munch the apples with which their pockets were stuffed. The dog, stumbling by chance upon Hackee's front door beneath the juniper bush, sniffed at it long and interestedly, and then began to bark. The boys jumped down from the wall and "sicked" him on eagerly. But this dog was not one of the digging tribe. He knew he couldn't be expected to crawl down such a hole as that, so, having no idea what *was* expected of him, he nearly went wild with excitement and anxiety.

Seeing that the dog was not going to dig, the boys conceived the idea of imprisoning Hackee in his own home. It was not exactly cruelty on their part, but rather an impulse toward vague experimenting. Here was a mysterious hole, with something alive in it. What more natural than to try and kill that something, and see what would happen? They got a long stake and jammed it into the hole, while the dog jumped around them, yelping his admiration of their prowess. To their amazement, the stake went down with the greatest ease to a distance of nearly four feet before it stopped with a jerk.

"Gee," remarked one boy, "but that fellow likes a deep hole all right!" And he ground the stake home vigorously.

"S'pose we got him?" queried the other boy, his eyes glued to the stake.

"Of course!" yelped the dog in an ecstasy.

The first boy cautiously pulled up the stake, the dog scrambling in as if he expected the unknown hole-dweller to follow it forth. The boy examined the point of the stake. There was no blood on it. Everyone looked disappointed, and the dog drooped his tail in dejection.

"No! Missed him, I guess," decided the boy. "But we'll stop up his hole for him, the beggar!" And he proceeded to drive the stake home once more.

Hackee, meanwhile, filled with curiosity and wrath, had come out by his back door to see what the strangers were up to, and was now sitting on the wall, not a dozen feet away, expressing his feelings with explosive vehemence.

"Darn that chipmunk!" remarked one of the boys, flinging an apple-core at him. "He's making fun of us!"

But in this he was mistaken. For Hackee was not making fun. He was cursing them with all the maledictions in which the language of squirrel and chipmunk appears to be so rich.

Of course, it was Hackee's business to dig a new front door without delay. He did, indeed, begin one promptly—from within—as soon as the troublesome visitors were out of sight. But he and the whole household were already beginning to grow a little indolent, in premonition of the long winter's sleep which was soon to come upon them, and after nearly three days the new shaft was yet uncompleted.

Just at this critical moment came the most to be dreaded of all the chipmunk's enemies, and caught Hackee unready. A black snake, alert in the warm noonday sun, and himself on the look-out for winter quarters, chanced upon Hackee's back door there in the open pasture. Being a snake of prompt decisions, he whipped in instantly and made for the central chamber, feeling sure that he would find some of the family at home.

They *were* at home—Hackee and three others. As that dreadful black form, noiseless and lithe and but dimly visible, came gliding into the chamber, Hackee and two of his companions darted criss-cross up and over the ceiling in a mad whirl of desperation. But the fourth, an inexperienced young female of the season, was unlucky enough to catch the snake's set, malignant

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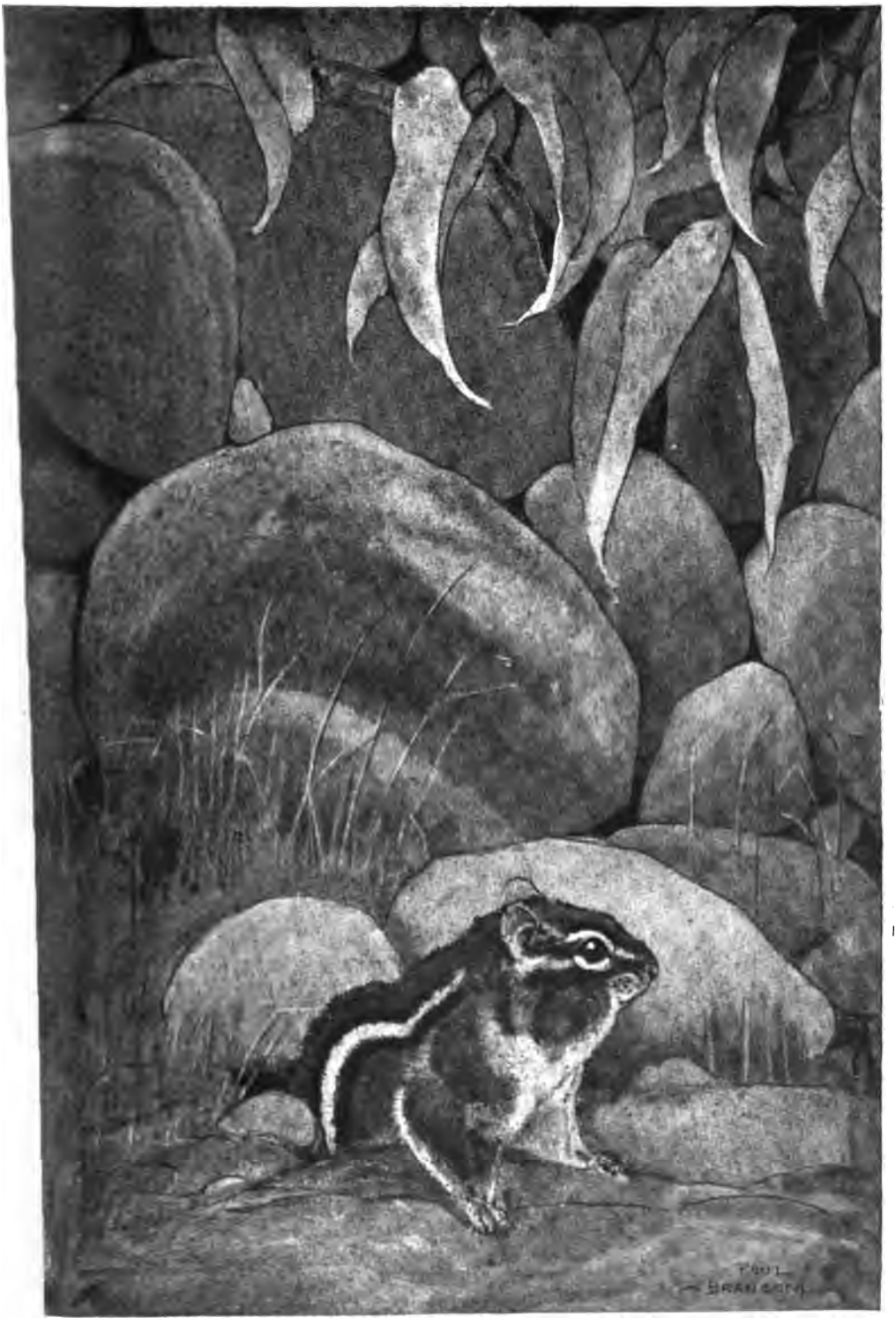

"For a little he waited there, half in and half out."

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eye. She crouched for half a second, paralysed. Then, recovering herself with a violent effort, she darted down the old tube leading to the closed front shaft. The snake darted after her at once, and as his tail vanished into the tube, Hackee and the others dropped shuddering from the ceiling behind him.

When the unhappy little fugitive reached the foot of the blocked shaft, she turned at bay. At the same instant the snake arrived. Striking before she had time to put up any defence, he drove his long, back-set fangs deep into her muzzle. Being not a venomous snake, but one of the constrictor family, his impulse was to wind her in his coils and crush her to a pulp before devouring her; and therefore he wished to drag her back to the chamber. But though she was dazed by the blow on the nose, she was not completely stunned by it, because her assailant had had no room to strike with effective force. Spreading herself flat, and digging in her claws, she resisted the snake's efforts to pull her back. Finding the task so difficult, and his appetite unusually insistent, he wasted no more time, but simply began to swallow her, head first, as she was.

It was a slow process, especially in the beginning. But as the victim was engorged, and her breath finally cut off, her struggles ceased; and in two or three minutes her shoulders, too, had vanished down that distended and writhing throat.

Meanwhile, the other members of the family, convulsed with panic, had fled out and hidden themselves in the crannies of the wall. But Hackee himself, being a veteran of many battles, always courageous, and charged with responsibility as head of the household, had pulled himself quickly together and remained in the burrow. He knew well enough that it was all over with his little companion. He understood the ways of the black snakes also, and he could tell by the sounds that came from the depths of the tube just how this ghastly business of the swallowing progressed. As he listened, his rage grew hotter and hotter, till presently, judging that by this time the assassin would have the victim so far swallowed as to be incapable of quickly disgorging it, he darted into the tube and bit clean through the snake's backbone just at the base of the tail.

The long, trailing body writhed and lashed, but there in the narrow tube it had no room to coil itself. Hackee raced nimbly along it, heedless of the jamming and buffeting he received, and fell furiously upon the tight-stretched skin at the back of the reptile's head. Flattening himself down upon the body, he clung so tightly that the maddest lashings could not dislodge him, and, of course, the hideously-distended jaw was powerless to seize him. With his keen teeth he bit and bit, now gnawing like a rat, now worrying like a terrier, till presently he succeeded in severing the spinal cord.

The convulsive lashings and twistings dropped to a strong, quivering motion: but for a while Hackee, in his rage, continued to bite and worry his now impotent enemy, till at last, realising that his victory was complete, he withdrew and ran out into the sun to make his toilet and proclaim his triumph. When he had informed the whole neighbourhood of it, and even convinced his trembling household, he returned to the burrow, and proceeded to wall up the old tube firmly to a depth of a good eighteen inches, thus securing to a certainty that the entombed slain should cause no more annoyance to chipmunks.

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THE MYSTIC FOOL.

By GERALD VILLIERS-STUART.

IN order that I may the sooner end this tale, I begin before the beginning. I go back to the night when old Rendleby was sitting in his study at The Laurels, puzzling through a magnifying glass over an old snuff-box, that he might determine whether it was a genuine Louis Seize or a masterly imitation. I never heard his decision. I only know that he was withdrawn from the reverie of bygone days, into which the snuff-box had carried him, by the insistent clamour of his own door-knocker. An excited young policeman confronted him in the partially scattered darkness, for, though old Rendleby lived in the outskirts of London, the house was within the zone of suburban police.

There was a burglar in the house—the policeman had seen him climb the wall, had pressed the bell without avail. Old Rendleby apologised for the delay, but his housekeeper was out. She attended to all such matters—bells, burglars—in fact, every department of life except curios. The collector's calm was very irritating to the policeman, whose speciality was burglars. The mere mention of the name had always been sufficient to arouse the most satisfying perturbation in the average householder, but this old fossil appeared to be all but unaware of the meaning of the word. How was the policeman to know that he was talking to a man who was little more than a lichened rock in the stream of life? Not old, by any means, only so considered because his ways were the ways of the old. A burglar! Dear, dear! He must be turned out at once; he might break something. The policeman assured him grimly that he'd turn him out all right, and they went to look for the man.

They trapped the burglar in a cul-de-sac of a room which contained Mr. Rendleby's most cherished possessions. A small, keen-faced man he was, and held in his hands a crystal goblet of the fourteenth century which had carried wine to the lips of Popes in Rome. How the burglar managed to convey to the owner of the goblet that, if annoyed, he would drop it in splinters at his feet, is a secret belonging to the cunning of the hunted, but he did convey that information before he said calmly: "I cleaned all them silver mugs what you told me, Mr. Rendleby, but this glawss is beyond me. It fair gives me the horrors to think I might drop it; a cross word or a crooked look would send it flying out of me 'and."

"Put it down at once, James," said Mr. Rendleby. "You know—you know——" Mr. Rendleby had intuition, but no eloquence. A frenzy of fear for his priceless goblet had so far forced him to say the wise, if not the right, words; now he began to flounder, but the policeman came to his rescue.

"Well, if this ain't the man I see climbing the wall, where is he?"

"Put it down at once, James!" pleaded Mr. Rendleby.

"Wot—a burglar in the house! It do make my 'ands tremble. The idea!" The burglar held tight to his crystal hostage. "Couldn't be the wye he climbed over the garden wall, I s'pose, into the next 'ouse? Nasty, sneaking bloke, if I may say so, sir!"

A policeman of riper experience might not have been taken in by the little game of bluff, but the householder's "Put it down, James!" had been uttered very promptly. The young policeman hurried to the adjoining house.

"You done me a good turn, sir," said the burglar, as he deposited the crystal goblet on a table. "'Twouldn't have done you no good to have me lagged; you'd have broke my life, as I'd have broke that mug. Well, your bits of things is safe from me, and they're safe from me pals; and if ever I can do you a good turn—well, you drop a line to the publican at 'The Lame Dog,' 'Ammersditch, and say you want the Joker."

Old Mr. Rendleby disclaimed any likelihood of taking advantage of the offer, but as they parted at the gate, he said: "If you ever hear of old silver for sale, you might——

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But, no—dear me, no—of course, that wouldn't do." Still, the mere fact that the thought had passed through his mind indicated a laxity of the moral fibre where ancient things were concerned.

* * * * *

Mr. Rendleby was not a rich man—he was worth perhaps ten thousand pounds, exclusive of his collection—but when old Lord Woldingham died, and his son decided to sell Vestrinelli's great masterpiece to satisfy the death duties, and the National Gallery said they had not the money to purchase, the collector came forward with an offer of one thousand pounds towards the price.

The amount needed to secure the picture for the nation was a hundred thousand pounds. Young Lord Woldingham would give five thousand. He could afford to do so, for the National Gallery and the newspapers between them were advertising his picture superbly. Millions of people who had never heard of Vestrinelli and "The Mystic Fool" were now aware that a great national loss was imminent. The Vestrinelli secured more than free advertising—it secured a hall-mark; it could now dispense with the cachet of experts and art dealers. General Virgil B. Smith, late of Chicago, now of New York, controller of half the railroads in between, and captain *d'Industrie*, would now cheerfully give a hundred thousand pounds for a picture whose value had been so thoroughly verified.

Young Lord Woldingham fixed a date by which the National Gallery must decide, and the period in between was to Mr. Rendleby a period of tense, exciting horror, for he loved "The Mystic Fool" with all the love he might have distributed amongst fellow-creatures, ambition, life itself. As a connoisseur of rare objects, as one to whom the mists of time which have gathered about perfection in any form are sacred fumes, as a man to whom the mysterious woman's face made all the appeal live women make to other men, he worshipped Vestrinelli's masterpiece. Not from afar, either; he had always had access to his divinity. Woldingham Abbey, only five miles distant from his own suburban residence, was one of those ancient houses about whose stone foundations the rising tide of speculative brick and mortar is beginning to lap. The old lord had given directions, in his regal manner, that Mr. Rendleby was to have free access to the picture gallery. He himself had no time to look at his pictures, but, becoming aware of his humbler neighbour's preoccupation and extraordinary knowledge, delegated the privilege. Whenever Mr. Rendleby felt drawn to worship at his shrine, he had merely to mount his tricycle—in bicycles he put no trust—and pedal away to Woldingham Abbey. There he could sit by the hour, trying to fathom the meaning of that fleeting expression which Vestrinelli had impaled upon the point of his paint brush. A woman of about thirty, rather beautiful, rather foolish, had suddenly seen something, understood something, but what had she seen? Was it the wisdom of folly, or the folly of wisdom, the meaning of life, the value of love? What knowledge had dawned upon her? What darkness had lifted, and why? Students had written volumes to prove a dozen different meanings, had credited the simple artist with superhuman symbolic power when the only power which he had exercised was instantaneous photography of a woman's mood.

When old Lord Woldingham died, Mr. Rendleby felt shy of intruding upon a house of mourning, but after several weeks of this divorce from the object of his affections, he was no longer able to stand the separation. He tricycled over to Woldingham, to find the door presided over by a new servant, a cynical-looking man, who suggested rather a stage valet than a nobleman's butler. The cynical butler knew not Joseph, displayed no enthusiasm for his acquaintance, and refused him admittance. Mr. Rendleby appealed to the footman, who corroborated his claims, but the cynical butler was adamant. Mr. Rendleby, shy, unaggressive man, turned broken-heartedly away. Then came the greater blow—the picture was to be sold. Next, a great hope irradiated the gloom. The trustees of the National Gallery would buy if they had the money. A powerful daily paper opened a subscription. As usually happens, the first half of the sum wanted came easily enough, then the stream of gold began to dwindle, so did the time limit. To Mr. Rendleby the housing of the picture at the National Gallery would be nearly equivalent to personal possession; he could go and see it whenever he felt inclined. He began to raise his subscription, as a poker player on the bluff raises his bets, a thousand at a time, until half his fortune was promised, and still there were thirty thousand pounds to be raised, and the paper had lost interest in Old Masters—was discussing a new way of making bread breadier. No gambler on the

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Stock Exchange ever scanned the quotations with such eager excitement as Mr. Rendleby. He would pore over the subscription list every morning, adding it up, in hopes of discovering a mistake on the right side. It was all rather pathetic. During the last week he hardly ate and could not sleep.

There was another man who also watched the subscription list with poignant emotion —a rising young journalist on the staff of the paper in which the subscription list appeared. Mr. Rendleby's first thousand had caused him annoyance, for, by the irony of Fate, the subscription was his own idea, and he was Mr. Rendleby's only nephew and heir. The second thousand caused him intense irritation, the third morbid anger, the fourth made him dance with impotent rage, the fifth caused him acute mental anguish. He dared not say anything to his uncle, he could not stop the subscriptions coming in; he could only pray that they would fall short of the required amount.

General Virgil B. Smith was not losing any free advertising. He was frequently interviewed about his purchase of the famous picture. So nearly had he obtained all the pleasure which its possession would have conferred on him that he had decided to subscribe a thousand pounds anonymously, should that amount be needed to make up the purchase price. In the end fifteen thousand was lacking, and, to young Rendleby's joy and his uncle's anguish, "The Mystic Fool" passed into the hands of the American millionaire.

* * * * *

Poor old Rendleby was as one distraught. On the day when the picture was removed from Woldingham, he took to his bed. The tragedy gained poignancy by its very comedy. Had he been bereft of a wife, he would have had the sympathy of the world. He had been bereft of more than wife, so he would only have the chuckles of the world, had it penetrated his secret. One little drop of water was lowered down into his hell. The picture would not at present go to America. There were import duties to be considered. General Smith had purchased a castle in Wales. There for the present "The Mystic Fool" would find a home in the picture gallery.

Old Rendleby roused himself and wrote a letter to the American millionaire. "He had always had the privilege of viewing 'The Mystic Fool.' Would its new owner continue the favour?" He did not say all that was in his heart—that was too sacred—but he pleaded his cause with pathetic earnestness. The letter arrived at the millionaire's castle on the wrong day. Leather would not amalgamate, breaches were appearing in the high tariff wall behind which he operated. It was an acrid post which included old Rendleby's letter.

"Application from some man near London for the privilege of frequently viewing that new picture of yours," summarised Mr. Barney, the secretary.

Now, General Smith was the kindest-mannered pirate who ever scuttled a railroad or depleted a bank reserve. Had he met Mr. Rendleby, and understood his tragedy, he would not only have made him free of his picture gallery, but have furnished him with big black cigars to smoke while enjoying the privilege. It is the habit of Americans to give publicity to their opinions and privacy to their possessions; they do not understand the feudal instinct which makes the English aristocrat share his treasures with his less fortunate countrymen.

"How do you size him up, Barney?" he asked irritably.

"Crank of the first water, General."

"Guess you're right. Tell him 'No.' Now, about that leather."

Mr. Barney dictated a letter telling Mr. Rendleby "No," and Mr. Rendleby once more took to his bed.

You can turn the most academic book-worm into a man of action if you only find his raw spot and flick it hard enough. Mr. Rendleby, flicked into action, arose from his bed of mourning a changed man. He was no longer a shy recluse, but an ardent lover whose mistress had been carried into captivity. The thought of that beloved face languishing in those unsympathetic surroundings meant to Mr. Rendleby what a woman held captive would mean to other men. He had an idea. He did not think of it as stealing. To him it was a knightly adventure.

Mr. Rendleby was going to storm Llandorf Castle and rescue the captive picture from the American robber baron, General Virgil B. Smith. The brute force of dollars had ravished the picture; by force should it be rescued. As the result of inquiries made about his foe, he learnt that he was no real general, but had won his marshal's baton in the post-office at Washington—he had been postmaster-general.

Mr. Rendleby knew very little about storming castles. He would need expert advice. To whom could he apply? There was his nephew, the journalist. He might

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advertise—yes, a carefully-worded advertisement! At that moment his eye was attracted to the crystal goblet which had carried wine to the lips of high pontiffs. "The Joker, 'Lame Dog,' 'Ammersditch." It all came back to him. Of course, he was the very man. "James" was a grateful soul, and "James" must have a wide experience in the storming of castles. Man of action that he was, Mr. Rendleby, armed with his bulgy umbrella, fought his way by underground passages, tubes, Districts, etc., to within a mile of "James's" lair; then he chartered a taxi, and placed the responsibility of finding "The Lame Dog" in the driver's hands.

At the sign of "The Lame Dog"—and, oh, 'twas in a slimy slum!—they took Mr. Rendleby for a detective, and treated him with reserve mingled with sarcasm. "The only joker in 'Ammersditch," the landlord asserted, "is a-sitting in that keb."

The man of action was equal to the emergency. Scrambling out of the cab, he slipped a sovereign into the landlord's hand and whispered: "James, Crystal Goblet, The Laurels." The password produced its effect. Mine host of "The Lame Dog" gave vent to a rough but not unpleasant guffaw. "So you're the old josser? Well, I might 'a' knowed. You come with me."

By devious and dirty paths, one of which led through a large oven, he was conducted to the Joker's lair. The gratitude of "James" had not evaporated. He had forgotten more about storming castles—cracking cribs was his slangy way of expressing the operation—than anyone inside or outside of Dartmoor had ever known. His skill and experience were at Mr. Rendleby's service. Conditions were imposed. In the first place, he must be guaranteed a hundred pounds out of the job, since, in his experience, pictures were the poorest kind of swag. In the second, he needed a complete change of air, not only for himself, but for certain chattels, property of a friend. "Torf, if there ever was one—been a actor, been a artist, been in Serciety. The Viscount, we calls 'im. Come to me a while back with a armful of clobber, 'e did. 'You keep these for me,' 'e says, in 'is almighty wye, as a torf might say, 'You 'old me 'orse.' Did me a good turn once, same as you, Mr. Rendleby, so I'm all for 'im. They're after him something cruel—picture in *Police Gazette*. Look at 'ere." The Joker produced a thumb-grimed copy.

The face was familiar to Mr. Rendleby. The Joker was of opinion that they had met in "Serciety," for his ideas of social landmarks were naturally hazy. "No, not in Society, but——" Mr. Rendleby paused. Of course, it could be only a resemblance, but it did remind him of the new butler at Woldingham Abbey—the same cynical expression—but, after all, there might be cynical criminals as well as cynical butlers.

"Well, anyway, he's on the run," continued the Joker, "and I'm not being overlooked meself. Now, if you'll take me on as old man at your little plice, Mr. Rendleby, I'll be snug as a bug in a rug, and so'll be the Viscount's clobber. And look 'ere, Mr. Rendleby, you once mentioned old silver. Well, 'ow's this for old?" He produced from a dirty red handkerchief a small silver Madonna combined with a holy water receptacle. "Not 'arf old—wot?" he cried triumphantly, as he handed it to the collector.

Mr. Rendleby gave a cry of ecstasy. "Cellini," he gasped—"a perfect example!"

"Chelleene? Oo's 'e? Sounds like a orchestra. But what's the differ?"

"Where did you get this?" demanded the collector.

"Never you mind where I got it." The Joker was beginning to think that he had been too expansive about the Viscount, and was not going to admit that it formed part of his "clobber." "I came by it honest. Point is, will you give wot it 'ud fetch melted?"

"Melted!" groaned Mr. Rendleby faintly. "Melt a Cellini!"

"Melt anything. A pound, and it's yours."

The deal was made, and so were all arrangements for the removal of the Joker to The Laurels. Mr. Rendleby returned home clutching the Cellini to his heart, but also nourishing there a carking fear. Shortly before his death, the old lord had bought a Cellini at Christie's for the Woldingham collection; he had never seen it, but he remembered the description. He had the catalogue of that sale at home. Suppose his new treasure should prove to be the Woldingham Cellini! He clasped it the tighter. If it were the Woldingham Cellini, he would have to return it.

One likes one's fellow-creatures to be honest, but there are times—— Well, I for one would have been willing to see poor old Rendleby retain that Cellini, whether or no, for, of course, it did belong to the Woldingham collection; and if he had not been a short-sighted, peering old fossil, and only a man of action, where the beloved face was concerned,

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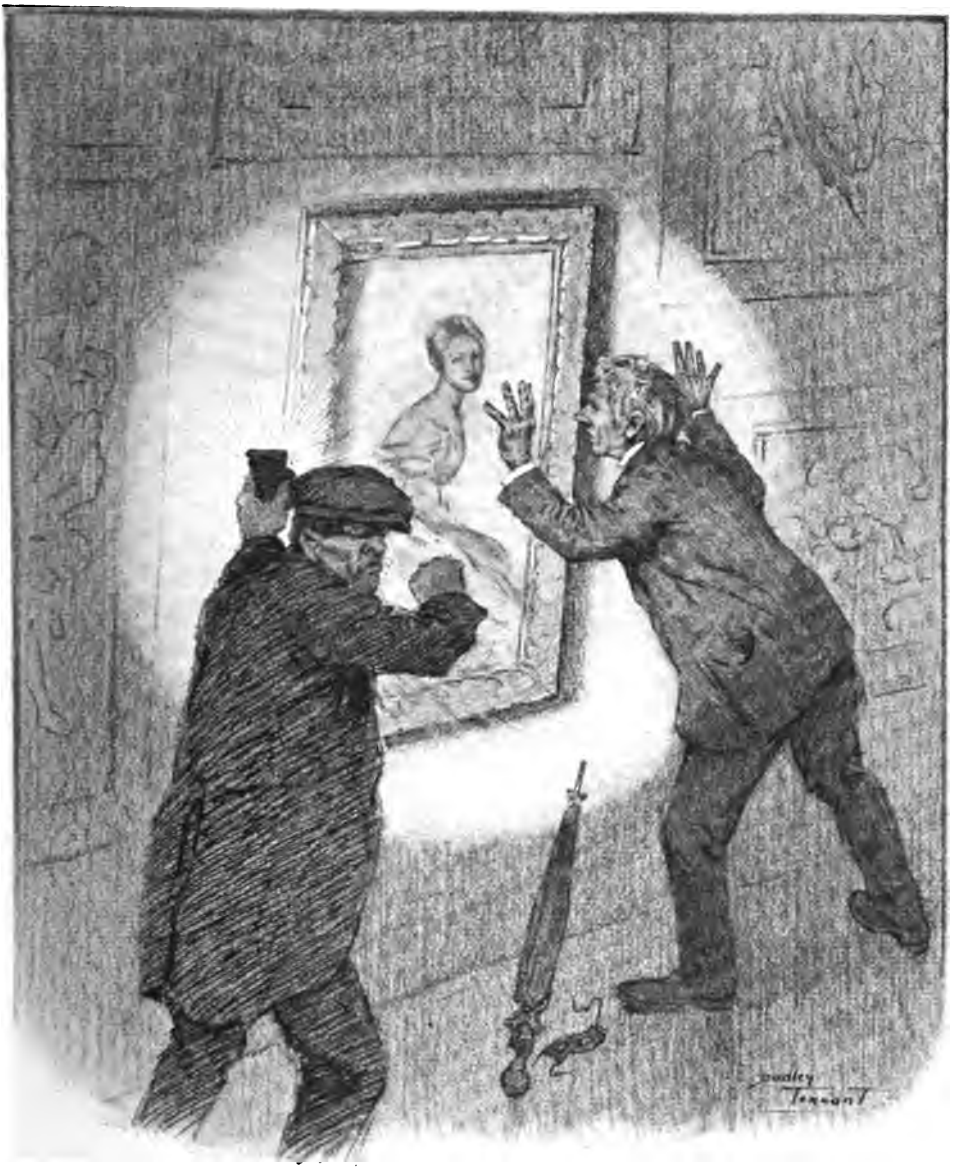
he would have connected it with the cynical-faced butler; but Mr. Rendleby was not the stuff Sherlock Holmeses are made of.

Yes, old Rendleby returned the Cellini to raid on a Welsh castle and a hundred thousand pound picture.

The Joker turned up at The Laurels on the following day. By the uninitiated he



"Mr. Rendleby made one rapturous move forward, his arms extended, and dropped the bulgy umbrella."

Woldingham, and my only consolation is this—it was a deed worthy of Robin Hood at his best. It was almost dramatic and quite knightly, this restoring of a valuable to his old friend's collection on the eve of a would have been taken for a poor but honest costermonger, since he propelled a barrow which ostensibly held vegetables, but was at heart a stolen goods van containing the Viscount's extensive "clobber."

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In the course of an hour The Laurels had digested the contents of the barrow, as a boa constrictor makes rabbits to disappear.

Mr. Rendleby, with all a lover's ardour and impatience, was for marching at once on Llandorf Castle, but the Joker insisted on the necessity of a reconnaissance in force. As the result of a few days spent in the adjoining village, he was able to report that the defences were weak, and the garrison reduced to a minimum by the absence of General Smith. The General was in New York, coaxing and browbeating "leather" to amalgamate, but might return by any steamer.

Armed only with his bulgy umbrella and an unframed canvas exactly the size of "The Mystic Fool," Mr. Rendleby joined the advance party at Llandorf.

"Could walk into it with me eyes shut," swaggered the Joker. "One of them mudievil plices with a new setting-room attached, mostly glawss."

That night they stormed the castle with a jemmy and other weapons of precision. The Joker objected from the outset to the presence of the bulgy umbrella, but Mr. Rendleby insisted on carrying it—he said it might rain.

Now, what were Mr. Rendleby's feelings as he slunk through the park on his way to his first burglary? Did his heart jump into his mouth as the fallow deer, roused from their sleep, bounded by in the darkness? Did he go goose-fleshed when he thought of the consequences of failure—the police, the judge, the convict dress? Did he swear when his feet stubbed themselves against the roots of trees? I assure you, no! Excitement had turned out fear. Mr. Rendleby thought of nothing but the beloved face into whose mysterious eyes his own short-sighted ones were about to peer; he trod the air with any lover going to a tryst, thinking only of the loved one, nothing of the obstacles between. He was aroused from an ecstasy of anticipation by the Joker halting him beneath the black shadow of the "mudievil" pile, and saying hoarsely: "'Ere, tike and put this on!" "This" was a large black mask—a burglar's yashmak. Mr. Rendleby feebly objected, but the Joker was adamant, and tied on the greasy thing, strongly reminiscent of other burglaries. The Joker's movements after this were swift, mysterious, but masterly. The defences of the castle, attacked at its weakest spot—"the new setting-room"—melted away at his touch. As the castle clock struck one, the storming-party found itself in the picture gallery, shedding on the pictures concentrated rays from an electric bull's-eye.

Be lenient in your judgment of poor Mr. Rendleby; don't call him "butter fingers"; remember that he was "seeing the face of his true love after long years of pain." For at the moment when the electric ray revealed the face of "The Mystic Fool," Mr. Rendleby made one rapturous move forward, his arms extended, and dropped the bulgy umbrella.

It rang on the polished floor like a tocsin bell on a stilly night. A dog somewhere barked, the shuffling sounds of humanity aroused from sleep drifted down a corridor.

"Run, you silly blighter, run!" whispered the Joker, cramming the offending umbrella into its owner's hand. Mr. Rendleby ran. Instinct took him back as it takes a homing sheep—by the ways it was driven. The Joker halted to bolt a door on the pursuers, and Mr. Rendleby never even knew it; but after a little while he knew that he was alone—alone and pursued. He had no idea how many hunted him as he fled through the darkness—it might have been a troop of horse or a single enemy. What did it matter? Through the drumming of the blood in his ears he heard hoarse shouts to stop, but only bounded forward more frantically through the darkness. Never did it wrap a stranger apparition than that masked figure clinging to an umbrella as it ran. At last his umbrella got between his legs and threw him heavily. He did not try to rise—he knew he could run no more—and the leading pursuer was upon him.

"Who'd 'a' thought you could run like that, Mr. Rendleby?" panted a familiar voice.

"What—you, James?" groaned the prostrate figure. "I thought——"

Then the Joker, with honest pride, described the magnificent rearguard action which he had fought, bolting doors upon the pursuers one by one. "'Twas my fault, after all, Mr. Rendleby," he ended. "There was no real occasion to crack that crib. In a manner of speaking, it was just professional swank. I takes a pride in me work. I wanted ter show you wot I could do. We only got ter wait till to-morrow night—servants' ball, and the kitchen-maid fair dotty about me. Tell yer the truth, it goes agin the grain ter do a job that way—sneak-thief's gime—but I'll do it for you, Mr. Rendleby. Yes, you and I, Mr. Rendleby, we'll go to the servants' ball to-morrow night."

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I shall not dwell upon this part of the proceedings—it is, perhaps, the least creditable to Mr. Rendleby—how he developed a perfect *flair* for fraud, and in the character of a geologist's assistant, who was staying at the inn on a mysterious gold-mining mission, attended the servants' ball at Llandorf Castle; how he was dragged through the mazes of Sir Roger de Coverley by the under-housemaid, assisted by the Joker and his "dotty" kitchen-maid; how he blandly discussed the burglary of the previous night with the butler, who, armed with a poisoned dagger—cold shivers through his listener—snatched from the walls, had led the attack; how, when the party was at its height, after the cook had sat on his knee and called him "old dear," he withdrew to the picture gallery with his accomplice, and carried off his captive lady love in his arms, while the Joker stayed behind to frame the substitute. No, I shall not dwell on this part of the adventure. The Joker had dubbed it sneak-thief work, and the epithet sticks.

I can't help paying a slight tribute to the honesty and self-control of the Joker, who, at Mr. Rendleby's slightest remonstrance, disgorged a gold salver from under his coat and replaced it on the sideboard. What if he did murmur to it, as he did so: "Horeevor, and not good-bye!" He merely retained, as a souvenir of the party, a few silver forks which had been given to him at supper.

* * * * *

The flight of "The Mystic Fool" was not discovered for nearly a week after Mr. Rendleby's raid; even then it was supposed to have occurred on the night of the burglary, and no suspicion attached to the geologist's assistant or the servants' ball. The theft of Vestrinelli's masterpiece caused a great sensation. General Virgil B. Smith, returned triumphant with "leather" in his pocket, was not the man to take his loss in silence. He hardly knew the picture by sight, and secretly preferred Mr. Rendleby's substitute; but it is not every man who can afford to have a half million dollar picture stolen, and General Smith wanted the public to be clear on that point. The paper on whose staff was young Mr. Rendleby took a very active part in the hue-and-cry, and young Rendleby, being vaguely supposed to know something about Old Masters, was instructed to head the pack. His instructions were to write up the picture and furnish a fresh theory day by day as to its whereabouts. If possible, he was to find and restore the lost lady to her owner.

Now, young Rendleby knew very little about Old Masters, but he knew the Vestrinelli by sight, and then there was his uncle, who knew all about Old Masters and loved them dearly. Young Rendleby shivered as he remembered how dearly, and the narrow escape of half his future inheritance. He might now turn his uncle's knowledge to account. He began his search for "The Mystic Fool" at The Laurels. He also ended it there; for, on being shown into his uncle's study, he found him sitting in front of the lost masterpiece in an attitude of profound despondency.

Young Rendleby rubbed his eyes; he wanted to be sure that they remained unaffected by that second glass of port after luncheon. But there was no mistake. Here, in his uncle's house, for all the world to see, most brazenly flaunted, was the lost masterpiece.

"Great Scott, uncle, where did you get Vestrinelli's 'Mystic Fool'?"

"Llandorf Castle, Herbert; but, alas, it is not Vestrinelli's picture! It is a clever copy, it's a fraud, it is not the picture which hung at Woldingham Abbey. It is not *my* 'Mystic Fool.'" He spoke as one bereft.

Young Rendleby groaned. Here was a very prince of "scoops," but he was muzzled; he dared not write a word. If he did, his uncle was ruined—and he was his uncle's heir.

"You mean to say you stole the picture?" he said incredulously.

"Must you call it that, Herbert? I removed it. I could not bear to think of her amidst such surroundings. I rescued her. I suffered much, and in vain. Where is she? Where is the original?"

"By Jove"—young Rendleby slapped his thigh—"I have it! The American had it copied. You'll see—the original will turn up on the wrong side of the New York Customs House, duty free, anonymous letter, the thief repentant."

"Then I shall never see her face again!" moaned poor old Rendleby. "And yet—well, to tell you the truth, Herbert, I was worrying about the honour of Woldingham. I feared the trick was there, I——"

He was interrupted by the Joker entering with a long newspaper parcel under his arm. "I've had a bit of luck, Mr. Rendleby," he said. "Not what I ain't sorry for the Viscount—did me a good turn once. But now he's gorn—drownded while escaping from the Thames police, and his clobber

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belongs to me. Well, there's a picter. No manner of value, but you're set on these things—'obby you 'ave. 'Stonishing like that one we 'ad so much trouble over. 'Ere, tike it." He held out the parcel to Mr. Rendleby and withdrew.

Old Rendleby unwrapped the picture despondently. Suddenly he gave vent to a decorous yell. "Herbert—it is—it is—it's she! It's the real Vestrinelli!"

Young Rendleby put his hands to his head and groaned. "Scoops" were rolling up in carriages, and he was muzzled. The truth, however, he must know. He left his uncle lovingly examining "The Mystic Fool," and went to interview the mysterious "James."

"Uncle," he said on his return, "General Smith never had the original. Your friend 'James' had this in his possession at the time Lord Woldingham sold General Smith—I fear I must use the word in that sale in its worst sense—the picture."

"A Woldingham! Impossible!" defended old Rendleby loyally. "Besides—— No, wait—I have it—the new butler, the Viscount—I should have thought of that before. I put it down to a chance resemblance. When old Motley was pensioned, at Lord Woldingham's death, the man they call the Viscount got in as butler. 'James' called him 'a artist.' That explains why he would not let me in—he was copying at the time." Old Rendleby was becoming a man of action again; he was running the trail magnificently—the sleuth joy was his.

"Bravo, uncle!" applauded young Rendleby. "But now that you've got the original, I suppose you'll let General Smith have his copy back. I'll manage it for you. Anonymous letter to my paper—it must be done through my paper."

"Herbert," said his uncle sternly, "I am surprised at you! You suggest that I should return the copy, leaving General Smith in ignorance about his unfortunate purchase—a most dishonest suggestion."

"Well, really, uncle, considering how you——" Herbert paused, embarrassed. He was his uncle's heir, and his uncle might be touchy about burglary.

"That was between me and General Smith, but this concerns the honour of the Woldinghams, to whom I owe a debt of gratitude."

Herbert took a rapid decision. "Uncle," he said sternly, "how about the honour of the Rendlebys? Will it redound to our credit if the head of the family is branded as a burglar, and first thing, you know, you'll blurt out the whole thing. The London detectives enjoy a reputation for stupidity—they enjoy it so much that they generally get their man. I insist that this be left in my hands. Lord Woldingham need never know. As for General Smith, we have got him in a corner. Why, a man like that would rather lose ten Old Masters than allow it to be known he had paid a hundred thousand for a brand-new copy!"

"He is a very hard man, Herbert—he would not even allow me access to her." He nodded towards "The Mystic Fool."

"You let me work it, uncle, and you'll have access to her as long as you live."

"You really think you can arrange that, Herbert?"

"Sure. We are in a position to dictate terms."

"And 'James'—I think 'James' has certain claims—don't forget 'James.'"

* * * * *

When General Virgil B. Smith heard the story from young Rendleby, he shook him warmly by the hand. "That's bully," he said—"just bully! I acted mean about that picture, and the old boy got even. That's one on me, sure. Saw no use paying expert's fees when I was bucking against your National Gallery. I got no guarantee, I've no legal claim on the original. I bought the picture as it stood. Don't suppose Lord Woldingham would take advantage, but I can't afford to have the truth come out, and that's the size of it. Mr. Rendleby, I am in your hands."

Diplomacy has its heroes as well as war. As a result of young Rendleby's diplomacy, everyone got what they wanted. General Smith, at Rendleby's suggestion, got rid of Llandorf Castle to another millionaire, and bought Woldingham. Rendleby got a commission so large that he was able to marry the girl he loved. General Smith got back the real "Mystic Fool," and "The Mystic Fool" got back her immemorial home on the walls of Woldingham. Old Mr. Rendleby lives at Woldingham now. He has daily access to his loved one; he is in charge of General Smith's famous collection, and can often be seen bidding fearlessly at Christie's. He guards General Smith against fraud, and the Joker—well, the Joker guards the collection against force—force and his pals of yesterday.

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ENGLAND'S STORY IN PORTRAIT AND PICTURE.

XXXII. THE REIGN OF GEORGE I.

1714—1727.

"QUEEN ANNE is dead." People were so excited—perhaps they were so relieved—to hear this that it seems to have become a catchword ever since. Fortune did indeed banter the Tories, as Bolingbroke said. Everything had seemed to promise them victory. They had the cleverest party managers, the most brilliant pamphleteers, the queen's sympathy, the nation's churchmanship, on their side. But a few determined men gave the crown to a German princeling who could not speak English. He had "no notion of what is princely," wrote his stern critic, Elizabeth Charlotte, Duchess of Orleans. A mysterious tragedy, the details of which have never become fully known, kept his wife in captivity since 1674. He quarrelled with his son George, and called his daughter-in-law "*cette diablesse.*" Tories said that to the last he knew as little of the English Constitution as of the English language. He certainly knew next to nothing about the English Church, and cared less, and his life was in many ways a discredit to the Evangelical religion, which he professed. But when all this is said, there remain not a few points to justify the respect which many English writers professed to feel for the first Hanoverian king. He was a brave man, fearless at a time when the life of an unpopular sovereign was by no means safe. As Dr. A. W. Ward says, he "shrank from no duty imposed upon him by the order of things." He was not an unconstitutional sovereign or a vindictive man. He kept his head when feebler persons amid such new surroundings might have made many mistakes; on the whole, he made less mistakes than did James I., the last king before him who came to England from another land. And so he ruled for thirteen years, survived a dangerous rebellion, and passed to his grave in peace.

GEORGE I., KING OF ENGLAND 1714-1727.
From an engraving by Basan, after a portrait by Sir Godfrey Kneller.

From the first it was clear that "the Protestant succession" was regarded in England as a pledge of stability. Queen Anne died on August 1, 1714; by the 6th the funds had risen ten per cent. Count Bothmer, the faithful representative and very wise adviser of George in England, informed his master at once of the death of the queen. At the end of the month, the Elector of Hanover, great-grandson of James I., started to assume the thrones of his ancestor. He at once dismissed Bolingbroke, and appointed Townshend Secretary of State. A Whig ministry, with seven chief officers as a Cabinet Council, took office when the king arrived. He was crowned on October 20, in Westminster Abbey.

The first events of the reign were of great importance. One was the passing of the Septennial Act – in force to this day—by which a Parliament's life is limited to seven years. This fixed the Whigs in power at a time when a reaction against them was very likely, and was, perhaps, the most important change in our Constitution made for over a hundred years. More serious at the moment seemed the landing of James Edward, son of James II. (few now doubted that he really was the king's son) in 1715. The Pretender

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had hoped to receive aid from France, but the death of the old king, and then that of Louis XV., a child only five years old, put an end to his hopes. Suddenly the Earl of Mar betook himself to the Highlands, and raised the standard of rebellion on behalf of the prince, whom he proclaimed under the title of James III. This Scottish rebellion, after some successes north of the Tweed, was finally crushed at Preston. Jacobitism was strong in the north, but not strong enough to upset the new monarch. Six peers were condemned to death. The "General," Forster, who surrendered, escaped from Newgate to France, and Lord Nithsdale, by the cleverness of his devoted wife, escaped also; but Lords Derwentwater and Kenmure perished on the scaffold.

After "the '15" the interests of George's policy, as was natural, were chiefly foreign. He joined the coalition against Sweden: he annexed Bremen and Veiden: he spent much of his time in Hanover, away from the critics of his politics and his morals. But the Triple Alliance of 1717, between England, France, and the United Provinces, was a wise and, on the whole, popular achievement in diplomacy. The Whigs, who had never ceased to declare France our natural enemy, and had impeached Oxford and

SOPHIA, ELECTRESS OF HANOVER, MOTHER OF GEORGE I.

From a portrait brought over from Hanover and given to Lord Raby. Artist unknown.

ERNEST AUGUSTUS, ELECTOR OF HANOVER, FATHER OF GEORGE I.

From a contemporary portrait.

Bolingbroke for their share in the Treaty of Utrecht, now reversed their policy, and threw themselves into the arms of the successor of Louis XIV. The position of the Regent Orleans was, indeed, not unlike that of George I. Both ruled by a sort of legalised usurpation, and mutual guarantees were of great importance to each. The Anglo-French alliance made the Hanoverian succession secure.

But George, if secure, was unpopular. Church feeling was against the Government, which from 1717 did not allow Convocations to sit. Toleration for dissenters was winked at rather than granted. An attempt to make the Whig supremacy permanent, by fixing the number of the House of Lords (Stanhope's Peerage Bill, 1719), was rejected. George quarrelled—irretrievably, it seemed—with the Prince and Princess of Wales. Public excitement rose to fever point in the South Sea Bubble, and the king was away when it burst (1720). For months speculation had overcome all legitimate trade. The original company formed to trade in the Pacific had had enormous success; its shares rose to incredible prices. A mania set in. Companies were formed for every conceivable sort of object and folly and imposture. A sharper even obtained a large sum of money for "a project which shall hereafter be revealed." Men became rich in a few hours. As soon

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"THE CORONATION OF GEORGE I., 1714: THE ENTHRONISATION."

By S. Begg.

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as they determined to sell out and buy houses and land, the crash came, and hundreds were ruined.

Robert Walpole, a country gentleman of remarkable astuteness, determination, and common-sense, who had since Anne's reign occupied at different times different posts in the ministry, one of the few men who had kept his head during the financial confusion, was called to power, with Townshend under him. Stanhope, the able and honest minister-general who had been in power, died on February 4, 1721, and George I. determined never again to part from Walpole as his supreme adviser.

"THE CORONATION OF GEORGE I., 1714." BY PETER SCHENCK.

Walpole was the greatest Whig statesman of the eighteenth century, and he remains the typical one. Early in life he obtained the reputation of being "the best master of figures of his time," and to be that seemed the crowning glory of Whig, or Liberal, statesmen up to Mr. Gladstone himself.

The mastery of figures does not come only from a certain natural genius, though, no doubt, that must be present; it comes also from an immense capacity for taking pains. That Walpole undoubtedly had. He was patient, laborious, consistent; yet he had no quality which attracts admiration or makes permanent impression on posterity. If you ask yourself with what great measure is the name of Walpole associated, you will be unable to answer. There is not one that we remember him by, unless it be the Excise Bill, which aroused unreasoning fury all over the country, and never became law. That was a measure of the soundest economic wisdom: its principle of bonded houses has long ago passed into our mercantile system, but it was not given to Walpole to convince the nation of its utility, so it cannot be placed among his laurels. It is puzzling at first to see for what Walpole is so famous. He was quite a commonplace man. A mere country squire, with low tastes and low morals, without a consistent foreign policy at a time when England's interests on the Continent were attracting more attention than ever before, without any interest in books at the time of the "Augustan Age of English Literature," he yet managed to obtain and to keep power over kings and politicians and people for

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over twenty years. Every attack on him seemed to make him stronger. And at the bar of posterity he seems to have no defence to offer, except that he was "necessary." The country could not do without him. The new dynasty was insecure on the throne, and it was thoroughly German. Walpole was a man who disliked movement of any kind, and he was a thorough and bucolic Englishman. Mr. Lecky said of him: "Finding England with a disputed succession and an unpopular sovereign, with a corrupt and factious Parliament, and an intolerant, ignorant, and warlike people, he succeeded in giving it twenty years of unbroken peace and uniform prosperity, in establishing on an impregnable basis a dynasty which seemed tottering to its fall, in rendering, chiefly by the means of his personal ascendancy, the House of Commons the most powerful body in the State, in moderating permanently the ferocity of political factions and the intolerance of ecclesiastical legislation." So it is that, when you begin to look into Walpole's career, you find a number of outstanding points. He was the first great economist among English statesmen. It was he who made the House of Commons supreme in the government of the country. He would never go to the House of Lords; and by cajolery and by bribery of all kinds—place, honour, money—and by skilful party management, he made the Lower House the agent of his will, and an agent capable of controlling both king and Lords. Partly because they were Germans, but much more because Walpole was their chief minister, the first two Georges set an example from which their successors never succeeded in escaping, though some of them desired to do it. The maxim that "the king can do no wrong" received a new meaning, which it may be supposed is permanent; and with it came the corollary that the English King is a sovereign who reigns, but does not govern. From Walpole dates the Cabinet system which, in the last two hundred years, has grown till it overshadows every other power in the State, even "the party machine." Anne had sat at the councils of her ministers: George would not, and he could not have understood them if he had. Though the word "Premier," or Prime Minister, was still thought unconstitutional as well as illegal, the thing appeared. Walpole was an undoubted Prime Minister, and an ordinary person to-day has to puzzle himself a good deal before he can think who his colleagues were. But a change

THE GREAT SEAL OF GEORGE I.

THE CORONATION MEDAL OF GEORGE I.

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at least as important came at the other end of the political scale. The mercantile class never till his time had a real share in government of the country, hardly a real influence on it. It was Walpole whose policy gave the meaning to the scornful description of Napoleon that the English were a nation of shopkeepers. It was through him that the shopkeepers came to have a controlling influence, almost undisputed, when a real crisis in national history arose. It was the Whigs who had founded the Bank of England and the new East India Company: each of these had enormous commercial interests. The National Debt had been mainly contracted for Whig wars, and it was felt that its security was connected with Whig predominance. But if Walpole conciliated the commercial classes, he by no means neglected the country gentlemen, to whom he himself belonged. It is a well-known story—and a true one—that he always opened first the letters from his gamekeeper, even before the king's. He loved country life and country sports: the House of Commons has had a holiday on Saturday

"LORD NITHSDALE'S ESCAPE FROM THE TOWER, 1716." BY E. M. OSBORN.

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"THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE, 1720." BY E. M. WARD, R.A.

From the original in the National Gallery of British Art.

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ever since his time, because he always went out hunting that day in the winter. He was the typical John Bull—burly, clumsy, hearty, good-tempered. His son Horace said, "It would have done you good to hear him laugh," and there are famous lines of Pope, who was his enemy, which very happily depict him—

> Seen him I have; but in his happier hour
> Of social pleasure ill-exchanged for power;
> Seen him uncumbered with the venal tribe,
> Smile without art and win without a bribe.

But those lines touch the worst point, perhaps, in his character, and certainly in his influence. If he did not say, "All men have their price," he acted as if they had. He systematised bribery, and he left an evil example to his successors which even Pitt the elder failed to break down, and only Pitt the younger, incorruptible as his father, but with no longer a Newcastle to counteract his influence, succeeded in conquering. It may be that he did not enrich himself by evil means or at the public expense, but it is certain that he gave his sons very rich sinecures, that he bought the most magnificent collection of Old Masters that any subject could purchase in those days—and the Georges hated "bainting" as well as "boetry"—and the house he built in Norfolk was, as Lord Morley says, a palace. After all this confused mass of ill-assorted illustrations of his character, perhaps it may best be summed up in his own son's words: "He durst do right, but he durst do wrong too"; and that is an unpleasant epitaph, however true, for a great minister of the English monarchy.

Thus much may be said of Walpole now: more remains for the reign of George II.,

JAMES FRANCIS STUART, "THE OLD PRETENDER." BY ALEXIS BELLE.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE, AFTERWARDS EARL OF ORFORD. BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

JOHN ERSKINE, EARL OF MAR. BY W. HASSELL.

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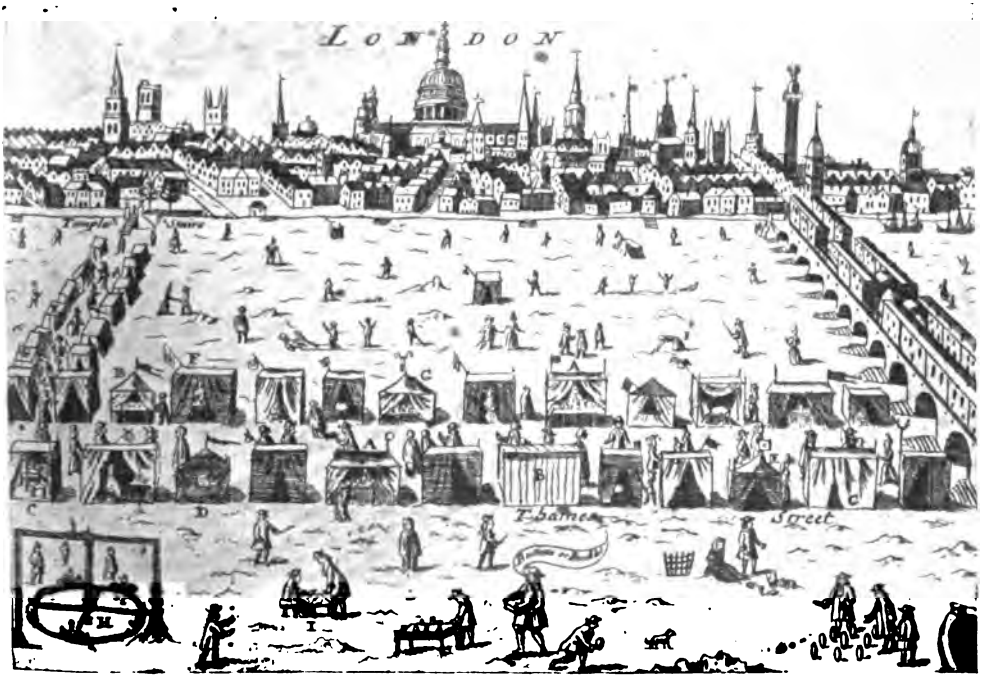
when, to the astonishment of everyone, he retained his power.

His predominance made the last years of George I. peaceful and secure. There were thoughts of a Jacobite rising when the king should die, but nothing came of it. The Spanish invasion of Scotland in 1718, as it may rather grandiloquently be called, did not encourage any foreign Power to repeat the experiment; and George I. was able to go to and from Hanover as he pleased. He certainly enjoyed himself. Carlyle says that he "at Hanover had his smoking-room, and select smoking party on an evening; and even in London smoked nightly, wetting his royal throat with thin beer." In 1727 the time had come for him to die: the nightingale at Herrenhausen ceased to sing, said the poetic Hanoverians. The superstitious said that his discarded wife—who had been shut up in prison ever since 1694—had summoned him, when she died in 1726, to meet her within a year and a day. He was on his way to Osnabrück on June 21, 1727, to see his brother, the Protestant prince-bishop of the curious principality which, by the Treaty of Westphalia, was alternately Catholic and ecclesiastical, or Protestant and secular. He was struck with apoplexy in the carriage, but he would not stop, and the horses were hurried on while the dying king murmured,

SOPHIA DOROTHEA, CONSORT OF GEORGE I. AND MOTHER OF GEORGE II. BY J. KERSEBOOM.



THE GREAT FROST FAIR OF 1715–1716: STREETS OF BOOTHS ON THE FROZEN THAMES, FROM LONDON BRIDGE TO TEMPLE STAIRS.

From a contemporary drawing printed at a press on the river.

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"Osnabrück, Osnabrück!" till at last he ceased to breathe. His was a life without dignity, and so he died. His son hated him, it seems: few loved him.

With the greatest desire to speak well of the new dynasty, writers still find it impossible to see anything romantic in its beginnings. The House of Hanover, which came, within a century and a half, to give such noble service to the English people, was at first but an escape from what might have been worse. But though the kings were German, the Government was English, and that was what made England content.

Among the few pictures inspired by the events of the period, one of the most interesting is E. M. Ward's vivacious rendering of a scene in Change Alley when the craze known as the South Sea Bubble was at its height. The nation, in 1711, had a National Debt of eleven million pounds, and Harley, Earl of Oxford, proposed to relieve the nation of the burden by forming a company of the chief proprietors, who would take over the responsibility, the Government guaranteeing them interest at the rate of six per cent. Ward's picture illustrates the later development of this idea in 1720, when the fundholders of the National Debt were induced to accept, in exchange for their claims upon the nation, shares in the South Sea Company, which had the monopoly of trade to the ports of the Spanish possessions on the Pacific coast. The company was well supported, and its stock came into favour. Exaggerated accounts were spread abroad of the profits that would ensue from trading to the rich countries of silver and gold. Enormous dividends of thirty, forty, and fifty per cent., paid by the directors to the shareholders, increased the general eagerness. The shares quickly rose. Two millions of stock were subscribed for at three hundred pounds for every one hundred pound bond.

Taking as his motto the words of the prudent Banquo to Macbeth, in Shakespeare's play—

> The earth hath bubbles, as the water hath;
> And these are of them,

the artist shows us the strange scene in Change Alley at the time when the throng of speculators was so great that brokers' tables, with clerks in attendance, were placed in the open street, and were frequented by patrons drawn from all classes of society, women as well as men gambling feverishly. The picture shows the pawnbroker's shop invaded by ladies anxious, as a contemporary ballad tells us, to—

> Pawn their jewels for a sum
> To venture in the Alley.

LONDON'S LOSS.

SUMMER is come, but the wild gull
That made our London beautiful
No longer haunt the river's marge,
No more on anchored float or barge,
Like ranks of puffballs, row on row,
Their beauty to rough urchins show;
No more their shadow on the stones
For many a dreary street atones,
No more about the bridge they fly
With strange, uncouth, unquiet cry,
Crowding to catch with sudden sweep
Crumbs that slow lorry-drivers keep
To toss them when they pass this way:
The City misses them to-day,
And fain would follow on their track,
Unto the land that draws them back
Across the deep dividing sea,
The home of their nativity;
Where by the rough grass and the sedges
Of northern fiords and steep ledges
Of rocky cliffs their haunt and way is,
Where crag and boulder are their dais,
And where their young, with broken cries,
First learn on fragile wings to rise,
Which soon will bear them o'er the foam
To seek with us their winter home.

EDGAR VINE HALL.

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THE SCARAB.

By NORMAN INNES,

Author of "The Governor's Daughter," "My Lady's Kiss," "Parson Croft," etc.

"A PRETTY thing—a very pretty thing." Mr. Stephen Marsh glanced casually at the pendant—a pale blue scarab, inscribed with a few hieroglyphics—that hung from his daughter's neck by a threadlike chain of gold. "Who gave it you, my dear?"

"Isn't it nice?" murmured the girl, playing nervously with the stone—a love-charm of the days of the Pharaohs in a modern setting of pearls.

"It wasn't bought for nothing"—the beauty and age of the jewel were alike lost upon the contractor—"but, my dear, you haven't told me who gave you the thing."

"It—it was Dick—Mr. Hallow." Audrey Marsh's cheeks matched the hue of her dinner-gown. "He brought it this afternoon."

"It must have cost him a tidy bit." Her father cleared his throat; his heavy features clouded as he considered his plan of campaign, which had for its ultimate object the discomfiture of Mr. Richard Hallow. "All the same, if I were you, I don't think I should wear it to-night. George Berridge is dining here, you know. A little bird told me that he might bring something with him, and, between ourselves, I think you are worth a bit more than an old blue stone and a few pearls, not to speak of young Hallow."

"But, dad, I'm sure you've nothing to say against Dick." The girl spoke tentatively, but, to her father's relief, without a hint of the petulance he had expected; and the latter seated himself before the hearth, crossing one leg over the other, and folding his hands in a fashion which his partners and managers were wont to associate with the discussion of some particularly knotty point in an estimate. He glanced round the room and then at his daughter. Audrey was very proud of her boudoir, with its high oak-panelled dado and distempered plaster work, which set off the few well-chosen water-colours to perfection, of her antique furniture, her china, and her silverware.

"Yours is the only room at Imberhurst that is habitable," Dick Hallow had said on a score different occasions, "and you suit it admirably."

To give the man his due, Audrey's taste had been formed by Hallow. It was he who had wooed and won her from the worship of the ostentatious gimcrackeries that passed current in Edgebury as the latest revelations in domestic art. Instinctively she had put herself beneath his guidance, the only point upon which she differed from her mentor being in the matter of tidiness. Audrey Marsh had a love of order and neatness; "a place for everything, and everything in its place," was a canon of Philistinism to the mind of Richard Hallow.

"My dear, I have nothing to say against him," Mr. Marsh admitted blandly, "neither do I know of much in his favour. I am not the man to object to my girl receiving presents from anyone; but if, on the other hand, a gift from Richard Hallow is to be taken as evidence of an attachment on his part, I feel it my duty to insist on your careful consideration of the young man's position."

Stephen Marsh closed his eyes—rather, all but closed them—with a sigh of relief at having spoken his mind. A little sigh, which seemed but the echo of the man's, broke the silence that had fallen on the room, and the flush that had been deepening on the girl's features died suddenly as she bent her head above the jewelled scarab. To tell the truth, she was relieved by the directness with which her father had arrived at the crux of a situation which, within the past two hours, may be said to have become acute. The colour came creeping back into her cheeks as she recalled Richard Hallow's visit. For the raising of her head she could have seen the loose-limbed figure of the man in the rough tweed suit seated upon the oak table in the centre of the room, oblivious of the silver ornaments, the neat arrangement of which he had disturbed. In the chair

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her father now occupied, she had listened to the tale of his love, and, carried away by the earnestness of his pleading, her heart had gone out to his. And yet, though protesting her devotion, she had temporised; while accepting the jewel he had brought her, had urged the necessity of consulting her father. Perhaps it was the banality of the suggestion that made Hallow laugh; the memory of that laugh still throbbed through the girl's brain.

"It is for your love that I am asking, Audrey." The man had become grave in a moment. "I may as well tell you that there is none lost between your father and me. I know, and perhaps you do also, that he would sooner see you marry George Berridge than me."

"Dick!" Yet she was aware of the fact in spite of her protest; her father's hints were but thinly veiled.

The other shrugged his shoulders, smiling. "We never have hit it, you know. I somehow don't conform to his standards. To begin with, there are my clothes."

He glanced down at his tweed suit; weather-stained as it was, its hues had never been subfusc.

"I don't seem to fit into the picture like George. My ideas upon business—your father would say I had none—my interests, my tastes are different to his."

Miss Marsh eyed the speaker in silence. He certainly had nothing in common with George Berridge; she had known the pair from childhood, and so was competent to judge. The only son of the founder of the firm was a man of moods and fancies—a dreamer of dreams—now uplifted upon some gust of enthusiasm, now lost in the depths of abstraction, as ready to rhapsodise over a piece of blue china as upon the deeper blue of her eyes. She had found him a trial at times, with his unconventional opinions and free-spoken criticisms, which were for ever outraging the narrow proprieties of Edgebury; one never quite knew what he would say or do. George Berridge, on the other hand, was always reliable, always correct; his actions, his opinions, in any given set of circumstances, could be gauged with absolute accuracy. One knew where one was and whither one was drifting with Mr. Berridge. His ideas and speech did not offend, his habiliments did not startle. Greys and drabs were the colours he affected; he was as sober as a deacon, as neat as a groom, and, withal, a presentable young man—square built, alert of eye, fresh-coloured, typical of the happy combination of the healthy mind with the healthy body. Berridge, temperate in all things, was a devotee of the middle course; his partner was given to extremes. He had been given to fasting in the days when his religious views were advanced; the first arrival at the smartest "At Home" of the Edgebury season, he had been known to eat a dozen crumpets, to the disgust of his hostess and the prejudice of later guests. He had spoken on temperance, and, again, he had been charged with inebriety by an ex-mayor of the borough, whose best after-dinner story he had interrupted. He had refused to prosecute a hungry vagrant, caught red-handed in robbing him of his fowls, and in a public street, in the lowest part of the town, had fought a navvy he had accused of ill-using his wife. Such contradictions were baffling, disturbing. Audrey Marsh could not help feeling that Edgebury was justified in its mistrust of Richard Hallow, and, though convinced of her love for the man, had spent the two hours between his departure and her father's appearance in her sitting-room gazing at the blue scarab pendant, and debating within herself whether the donor was genuinely in love with her or not.

Stephen Marsh had been watching his daughter; he had noted the failing of her colour, its gradual return, the tapping of her shoe upon the fender, as the girl leant, with her elbows upon the mantelpiece, looking down into the fire.

"Well, my dear, I fancy you must see my point of view." The man spoke suavely. That interval of silence had told that the enemy's position was not so impregnable as he had feared. His daughter nodded.

"You don't like Dick, dad?"

"Well enough as a friend, my dear, well enough as a friend, but not as a partner, and still less as a life-partner for my daughter."

"But he's clever."

"Undoubtedly, and that is why I am disappointed in the fellow; with his parts and position, the son of the founder of the firm might be expected to take a greater interest in the firm's affairs."

"I am sure he's interested——" began the girl.

"To the extent of thirty thousand pounds invested in the business. But instead of occupying himself with everyday routine, he wastes his time in working out some impossible invention, and mine in attempts to explain his theories. Last winter it was

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a hydraulic crane, now it is a scheme of old age pensions for the hands. Hallow lacks grit and ballast, and, but for his capital, would not remain in the firm another month."

The girl was silent. To her the possibility of the lapse of the founder's name from the title of the firm, Hallow, Berridge & Marsh, Contractors, of Edgebury, was a matter of little moment.

"My good child"—warming to his work, Stephen Marsh grew ponderously paternal—"to put it plainly, Hallow is not the man for me, and therefore not the man for my daughter, nor can I allow her to throw herself away upon a beggar, when a rich man—one who will make his mark in the world—may be had for the accepting. Mark my words, though their positions are equal now, when Berridge is five-and-thirty, and I on the point of retiring, Richard Hallow will have made ducks and drakes of his fortune, while the other will be managing director of the biggest firm of contractors in the kingdom—an M.P. probably—with an income of anything beyond five thousand pounds."

"But, father, I—I care——" stammered Audrey, still fingering the scarab, and paused to ask herself whether she was quite certain of her feelings, not to speak of the man's. Did he indeed set her before his china, his prints, his old books with their curious bindings, his wild theories and impracticable inventions? Did she love him to the exclusion of all else in life? Certainly she had encouraged George Berridge, as certainly as the latter, in his quiet, undemonstrative fashion, had been paying her unmistakable attention. "He has asked me to marry him," she added, with a sense of relief at taking the stolid, benignant figure in the arm-chair into her confidence.

"I expected it would come to that." The man fingered the diamond in his shirt-front complacently, assured that Richard Hallow's cause was as good as lost. "But, my dear, these things will happen. Of course, you care for Dick—you have known him all your life; but you have known George Berridge as long, and since, in the present state of society, a woman must content herself with one husband, I think you will agree with me that in your case that position could not be better filled than by——"

"Mr. Berridge!" A servant had opened the door, and a neat figure in evening-dress was already in the room.

"Well, George"—Marsh rose to greet his visitor—"in good time, as usual. We're not dining till eight. Audrey will look after you, if you'll excuse me. I have a couple of letters I must write, and I've just got ten minutes in which to get through them."

Of all that followed in the next ten minutes, which were prolonged into nearly twenty, it is unnecessary to say more than that Stephen Marsh, on returning to his daughter's sitting-room, having presumably completed his correspondence, was well satisfied with the atmosphere of constraint which greeted his appearance. Bright-eyed, flushed, the girl seemed deep in identifying for her visitor's edification the contents of the family photograph album, while the latter's attention seemed equally divided between the stolid presentments of divers members of the house of Marsh, and the more obvious charms of their kinswoman. A few brief moments of tension, the girl enlarging upon the virtues of a maiden aunt long since deceased, the man interpolating trite platitudes as to the change in feminine fashions, and then the butler announced dinner. Marsh rubbed his hands as he followed the pair towards the dining-room, and, noting with content that the blue pendant no longer hung from his daughter's neck, was inclined to look upon himself as a diplomat of the premier rank. It was when Audrey had retired to the drawing-room that the success of her parent's diplomacy was triumphantly proclaimed by a stereotyped and somewhat halting communication from his junior partner.

"I congratulate you, my boy, and Audrey, nor will I leave myself out either—in fact, I congratulate the firm." The elder man was bubbling over with satisfaction. "I saw it coming—I hoped it was coming—and nothing could have pleased me better. Between ourselves, George, I wasn't quite sure that, after all, that fellow Hallow wouldn't wreck your chance and my best hopes. He's sweet on Audrey, and I've reason to suppose that at one time she was fond of him. I wish he were out of the firm."

Mr. Berridge nodded and smoothed his neat moustache. A man of few words was George Berridge.

Within four-and-twenty hours Richard Hallow was out of the firm—at least, to all intents and purposes. The senior partner was somewhat staggered by the sudden fulfilment of his wishes. At eleven o'clock on the morning following, Richard Hallow had called at Imberhurst, or, rather, had made his way into the house, his manners being unconventional, his intimacy with the family unquestioned. Going straight to

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Audrey Marsh's boudoir, and not finding the young lady there, he had rung the bell.

"Is your mistress at home?" he demanded, on the appearance of a maid-servant.

"Yes, sir"—the maid hesitated—"but she is lying down."

"What's wrong?" The rugged face whitened. Hallow was less disturbed by the news of the mistress's indisposition than by something in the girl's manner. There was a look of knowledge, of interest in her face, perhaps of embarrassment.

"She has a headache, sir. She wished me to give you this; she said you would understand what she meant."

In her hand was a small cardboard box, tied with a piece of blue ribbon. The man took it, then, biting his lips, he looked at it closely as if to read the name of the firm of jewellers printed upon it.

"What did she say?" he asked with an obvious effort.

"Miss Audrey said you would understand, sir. I can't say what she wishes you to do with it."

"Nor I." The man laughed. For a moment the maid fancied he was on the point of tossing the package into the fire. Instead, he thrust it into his pocket, and, with one glance round the boudoir—the only room in the house which, in accordance with his eclectic taste, was fit environment for one beneath royal rank, and yet above the status of a money-worshipping plutocrat—made for the door.

"There is no message I can give Miss Audrey?"

"None," rejoined the other, to add, as he turned in the doorway: "Yes, you can tell her that I do not understand, though be sure to let her know that she need not be afraid of me mistaking her meaning."

Nor had Stephen Marsh the smallest grounds for mistaking his partner's meaning when, an hour later, the younger man bluntly stated his determination of severing his connection with the firm.

"My dear boy, what has put this idea into your head? Such a step should not be taken without the maturest consideration."

The other laughed. "For a long time I have been thinking of taking this step, which to you appears so extraordinary, though it is only within the last hour that I have considered it seriously."

Marsh leant back in his chair speechless. His first emotion had been one of amazement, which had been quickly succeeded by a feeling of relief, and then a sudden fear possessed him—a fear lest this thriftless eccentric should press for the withdrawal of his share in the firm's capital.

"Oh, I don't wish to inconvenience you or Berridge, or to touch my capital—at least, not at present. The lawyers could arrange about that later on. If you want to know my reason, I am sorry to say my interest in the firm is gone. I am tired of Edgebury, and, between ourselves, I gather Edgebury is tired of me. In this place I feel cramped. Good or bad, I possess a few ideas of my own, and it is for the purpose of discovering their practical value that I am going to sever active connection with the business my father founded."

He nodded to Berridge, who at that moment entered the senior partner's office, a roll of plans beneath his arm.

"I have just been telling the chief that I am resigning my seat in the boat; she'll go the better without me. We never quite swung together, and I shall have a chance of developing my style."

George Berridge glanced at the other two and smoothed his moustache.

"I'm very sorry——" he began, having in mind the seceder's capital.

"And in a week's time you'll both be precious glad. No, thanks very much, Mr. Marsh, but I can't dine at Imberhurst to-night. I am off to town by the three-thirty, and shall most likely go on to Berlin. I don't want any fuss; all I wish to do is to drop out of the concern and leave you two with a free hand. You remember the hydraulic crane I was so keen on? Well, I fancy I've got hold of a German who shows signs of interest in the idea. I hope to see you both in a month or two's time. Sedgwick, who has practically been running my department for the last half-year, will be able to post you up in everything."

"Well, you'll dine with us, George?" said the senior partner, when Hallow had taken himself off.

The other nodded.

"By the way, I fancy Audrey may not be with us. She's got one of her bad heads, and told me she would not be down to-day."

Audrey Marsh did not appear at dinner that evening, and the two partners dined alone.

"Things couldn't have turned out better," said the elder. "He's gone, and there seems no immediate likelihood of his capital going with him, unless he gets fleeced in Berlin. Apart from the business, I have other reasons for satisfaction at the step he

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has taken. As I have told you, he was once sweet on Audrey, and I cannot help thinking his sudden resolve may have something to do with your engagement."

"But he could have known nothing of it." Berridge looked at his host, who shrugged his shoulders.

"He was here yesterday afternoon, he was here again this morning. I fancy he must have seen Audrey. By the way, when do you young people propose getting married? I shall miss the girl, but the sooner you are settled the better."

His guest was taken aback.

"Well, Audrey said she did not wish to be married for at least a year, and I am inclined to agree with her. With these new contracts, we shall have our hands full at the office for the next eighteen months. Naturally, she would want a longish honeymoon, and, what with one thing and another, I think it would be best to follow her wishes as to the date of our wedding."

"When I was young, we thought rather differently," replied the senior partner, refilling his glass, "but, of course, you must arrange the matter between you. Here's success to the new *régime!*"

Fortune, however, did not smile on the new *régime*. From the beginning some fatality seemed to overshadow the contracts which the firm had entered into about the time of Richard Hallow's retirement. The most important—forty miles of light railway in Wales—gave but small hope of proving remunerative. Heavy rains interfered with the work and added to the difficulties of construction, while labour troubles necessitated continuous stoppages. Delays in payment on the part of the employers—a financial syndicate—marked the carrying out of some costly drainage works in the north of England, and resulted in even costlier litigation, while one or two smaller undertakings showed but the minimum of profit. The firm's resources were strained to the utmost, and, to add to other misfortunes, at the beginning of the third year, Stephen Marsh's health broke down beneath the strain. With business affairs in so critical a condition, with the sole responsibility on his hands, George Berridge was tied to the office. Bluntly he told his partner that, under the existing circumstances, he could not entertain any idea of a speedy marriage, when the latter had complained of his daughter's protracted engagement, insisted that the interests of the firm must take precedence of sentiment, and argued that, if the woman did not object to waiting, no one else had a right to interfere. Having failed with his prospective son-in-law, Marsh, who, as his health went from bad to worse, seemed inclined to attach greater importance to purely domestic affairs, had recourse to his daughter. Her marriage, he told her, was his one object in life. Hitherto she had been content to wait until it suited her *fiancé's* convenience; now he implored her to demand the fulfilment of the latter's pledge. Audrey Marsh listened to the sick man's appeal in silence, and, having implicitly obeyed her father for four-and-twenty years, acquiesced. Doubtless she would have broached the matter to her lover without delay—George Berridge came regularly to Imberhurst at six o'clock every evening to give his ailing partner a *résumé* of the day's transactions, afterwards dining alone with Miss Marsh—but for the fact that, towards nightfall, her father's condition suddenly changed for the worse. The doctors pronounced it critical, forbade the patient seeing anyone except his daughter and the nurses. Towards midnight the invalid again referred to the matter nearest his heart.

"Have you seen him?" he whispered to the girl at his bedside.

She shook her head. "I couldn't to-day, father, but I will—really, I will."

"You promise me, my dear, that, whatever happens, you will speak to George on the very first opportunity, and that there shall no longer be any delay."

"Yes, father."

The man smiled as his eyelids closed; he could trust his daughter's word. Stayed by that trust, Stephen Marsh never opened his eyes on the world again.

George Berridge called at Imberhurst the following morning, as soon as he learnt that his partner was no more, but did not see Audrey before going on to the office. It was not till evening that the pair met. Berridge found her in her boudoir, writing. While sympathetic, his condolences were formal, almost commonplace. As he entered, her eyes had grown dim, a lump had risen in her throat, but, while he was speaking, she had recovered herself, and was able to answer him without an effort.

"Yes, you can help me, George—you must; I have no one else. But first I want to speak to you on a matter that was troubling father at the last. He was so anxious that we should be married as soon as possible."

"Of course, this will make a difference,

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Audrey," stammered the other. "I wanted——"

"We might, I think, be married at the end of a year—quite quietly, you know, if only to please father; he was so anxious that it should be settled."

"It was about this that I wanted to see you—about our engagement and matters connected with it. To tell you the truth, and the truth, you know, is often quite as unpleasant to tell as to hear"—the speaker fingered his moustache, his eyes upon the embers in the grate—"I feel sure you will agree with me that it is hardly possible, in the light of what has happened recently, that we should be married——"

"Not for some little time, certainly, but at the end of a year."

"I meant"—the man paused—"I meant that under existing circumstances—circumstances which I think are best explained without delay—our marriage, the continuance of our engagement, is out of the question."

The woman stiffened and rose.

"Please explain, Mr. Berridge." She spoke coldly, icily.

The other got up from his chair.

"You must have been aware of the extremely difficult times the firm has had to face in the past two years—the result of speculative ventures and costly litigation upon which your father insisted." George Berridge took a step towards the door, as if to prevent the other leaving the room. "Hear me, if you please, and, if you please, give me the credit of making this explanation with the greatest compunction, and as much in your interests as mine. Twelve months ago, when the firm was in the gravest financial straits, our senior partner took a step which was fair neither to you nor to me—a step of which I have only recently become cognisant. Pressed by his creditors, he applied certain sums of money belonging to our late partner, Mr. Hallow, to the firm's and his own personal use."

"Mr. Hallow's money? My father did this!" The woman's face, that had been flushed in anger, went grey as ashes. "Then it must be paid back at once. Thank you for telling me."

"It is impossible—quite impossible; your father's private affairs are hopelessly involved. He owes the firm more than ten thousand pounds, and from what his lawyer, my co-executor, tells me, I gather the estate will be unable to meet half the claims upon it."

A hush fell upon the boudoir, broken only by the fall of the embers on the hearth. George Berridge's fingers drummed nervously upon the back of a carved Jacobean chair. He did not look at the woman, who stood at the foot of an ottoman, her dress showing white against the panelling at her back. She glanced round the room she loved, that held her dearest possessions. What she had heard meant their dispersal; beyond this she had grasped but one point in the situation.

"And I am to understand that it is because my father died practically bankrupt, because I am penniless, that you wish me to consider our engagement at an end."

"Well, Audrey—Miss Marsh," stammered the man, "you'll forgive me putting it in another way, but we Berridges come of an honest stock, and your—my late partner, unfortunately, most unadvisedly——"

"Made away with Mr. Hallow's money," interpolated the woman, unflinching.

"Which the firm—which I will have to make good."

"So in reality he robbed you, the man whom he hoped would marry——" She paused, as if at a loss for words. For a moment the last vestige of colour died from her cheeks, and in the next her eyes were alight. "I understand—yes, I understand. Mr. Berridge, our engagement is at an end. Please leave me at once." Her voice trembled with involuntary laughter. "You are certainly not the man to marry the daughter of a fraudulent bankrupt!"

With lips parted, she stood listening as the man's footsteps died in the distance, and then, with a sob, she sank beside the chintz-covered ottoman.

It was a bad business—all Edgebury admitted as much, giving George Berridge due credit for the skill and courage with which he extricated the firm's affairs from the tangle in which the death of the senior partner had left them. In the case of Stephen Marsh's private liabilities, little could be done. Ugly comments were made upon the deceased's transactions; bitter things were said about his daughter, upon whom twenty thousand pounds had been settled by the contractor in the heyday of his prosperity. The estate was made bankrupt; Imberhurst, its furniture and effects, were sold for the benefit of creditors. It was remarked that Mr. Richard Hallow was present at the sale, the first occasion upon which he had been seen in his native town for more than three years. It was also noticed that he was a large buyer of his late partner's effects.

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Immediately after her father's funeral, Audrey Marsh had gone to stay with an aunt in London, and Edgebury knew her no more. She had said "Good-bye" to no one, had written to no one, save for a curt letter to George Berridge, in which she had refused

"She turned to the man, her face alight."

to relinquish a penny of her fortune for the benefit of the firm or private creditors, in accordance with a suggestion that gentleman had made. Instead, unbeknown to a soul, she had opened a correspondence with Mr. Richard Hallow, who lived in a flat above his office in Victoria Street, Westminster. Not that she had met with any satisfactory response on his part, or even courtesy: Richard Hallow had always been an erratic correspondent. Her proposals—rather, her appeal—met with a blunt refusal in typescript; two subsequent letters urging her request had been unanswered, a fourth produced a reply in the shape of a telegram. It ran: "Be at the office at four to-day, otherwise negotiations terminated."

But for the fact that she had but an hour in which to accept or refuse the offer, Audrey Marsh confessed that she would never have presented herself at Mr. Hallow's office, where a clerk received her, passed her

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on to another clerk, who, in his turn, led her by way of a circular stairway to the floor above. They paused at a door marked "Private." Her conductor knocked. At the sound of a somewhat unmusical voice, Audrey's purpose all but failed her; but that her retreat was cut off, she would have fled down those breakneck stairs. How she entered the room she could hardly say. It was the well-remembered aroma of a pungent brand of tobacco that steadied her reeling brain.

"I am so glad you were able to come." The man's tone, his manner as he rose from a table in the window, while obviously meant to be encouraging, betrayed embarrassment.

"It is good of you to see me." Audrey Marsh spoke hurriedly, without meeting the deep brown eyes. "It is very good of you to do what I ask. You don't know what a load it will take off my mind."

A flush broke upon her cheeks as she stole a glance at the clean-shaven face.

"Sit down." He drew up a chair before the fire. "You know I've been wanting to see you for ever so long, though it wasn't about this particular matter, which, by the way, may not be quite so easy to arrange as you suppose."

He had seated himself upon the table, his shoulders bowed, his limbs outstretched.

"But you said that you agreed," stammered the visitor, looking the man full in the face, as she drew a telegram from her glove.

"Conditionally." Richard Hallow met the blue eyes smiling.

"But why——" began the woman, to pause and rise with a spreading of her hands. "Oh, Dick, you must! Don't disappoint me and say you won't! You must take it, for the sake of father's good name—for the sake of my peace of mind. I would not let the others have it—I know what they think of poor dad and me—but I meant it for you. He took your money—George Berridge said so—and I mean to give it back."

"G. B.'s taste has deteriorated." He looked at the girl rather oddly. "It was once beyond dispute. But I don't want it back. What's more, I won't take it, except on conditions."

"Conditions?"

The other nodded; the smile still flickered at his lips. "That you go into the next room—my best parlour, so to speak—and choose from the table something in exchange for the sum of money you wish me to take, in memory of—shall we say?—of this visit."

Still seated on the edge of the table, he pointed to a door to the left of the window, and then, rising slowly, followed the woman with his eyes. She had come to a sudden halt not a yard beyond the door, and was looking back at Hallow, her face a mirror of mingled pleasure and amazement.

"It's Imberhurst," she gasped, all but breathless—"my own, own room at Imberhurst, furniture, ceiling, panelling and all, even the window!"

"And we are in Westminster, Audrey."

"While everything comes from home—chairs, china, pictures, my silver table——"

"It's from that table that I want you to choose something for remembrance."

He had followed the woman to the middle of the room, and they paused beside a carved oak table littered with silver knick-knacks.

"Mine! And, Dick, you bought them all?" She turned to the man, her face alight.

"All except one. I didn't buy that—at least, not last May."

Her glance roamed over the table, and then the fair head was suddenly bowed as her eyes rested on a pale blue stone, a circle of pearls, a filigree thread of gold.

"Have you made your choice?" Hallow had gone to the window, and was looking out at the fog-blurred traffic. The woman made no reply, but her host seemed interested in the stream of vehicles beneath, for a full minute passed ere he repeated the question. Even then he did not turn, nor did the other answer. It was not till the man was conscious of a footfall behind him, of a touch upon his shoulder, that he swung round. In silence his visitor faced him; her lips were quivering, her eyes were bright and liquid, and a pale blue scarab hung by a thread of gold from about her neck.

"I can take that twelve thousand, Audrey," whispered Hallow as he stooped above her, "and I am sure you won't miss it now."

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THE TWO ESSENTIALS.

TOURIST: What do the people round here live on?
RUSTIC: Pigs, sir, mainly, and tourists in the summer.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

SMALL BOY: Papa, what does arbitration mean?

WISE PARENT: It means that, when two Powers of equal strength get hold of a smaller country, they agree to divide it equally.

"THE theory of governing children by appealing to their reason isn't all it is made out to be," said a school-teacher recently. "It's my opinion that a youngster actually needs a good spanking once in a while for his health. Here is an instance. One of my boys had skipped his classes, deceived his mother, been found out, and caused much unhappiness all round. I took him aside, and we had a heart to heart talk. Bobby sat still, looking at me intently, deeply interested. I thought that my little sermon was making a great impression and penetrating his head. He seemed positively fascinated by my line of argument. But you never can tell. Just as I had reached the climax in my appeal to his better self, a light of discovery broke over Bobby's face. 'Say, teacher,' he said eagerly, 'it's your *lower* jaw that moves, isn't it?'"

"EVERY kind of creature is here for a useful purpose. Now, what do we learn from the mosquito, Tom?" asked a teacher, trying to evolve the word "patience."

"We learn from the mosquito," answered Tom, "how easy it is to get stung."

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THE FORCE OF REASONING.

"Wot's the meanin' of 'ditto,' 'Arry?"
"Why, this 'ere's one bloomin' brick, ain't it?
"Yus."
"Well, that there one's 'ditto.' See?"
"But they both look just the same to me!"

A BALLADE OF STILTON CHEESE.

Milk, be it goat's, or cow's, or ass's,
Should have lofty aims in view,
Scorning to be drunk in glasses,
As, I hear, some rum folk do.
Butter may thereof ensue,
If the dairyman so pleases;
But if cheese, then this is true—
Stilton is the king of cheeses.

The cow that crops the luscious grasses,
Freshened with pellucid dew,
Little recks how many classes
The result may fall into—
From the reindeer cheese they chew
Where the Arctic milk-pail freezes,
Up to Stilton, ripe and blue—
Stilton is the king of cheeses.

Camembert at times surpasses
All my hopes, when ripe right through;
Cheddar, laved by creamy Basses,
Often gives me life anew;
Gruyère, Rocquefort, Port Salut—
Horrid rhyme!—though each appeases
Palates difficult to woo,
Stilton is the king of cheeses.

Gourmet, I appeal to you.
Of all the curds the farmer squeezes
From his wring, which is the *clou*?
"Stilton is the king of cheeses."

C. F. Austin.

Too many honest people make the mistake of trying to beat a swindler at his own game.

ENQUIRING LADY: Children, who is your father?
ELDEST CHILD: Why, he's the man who stays at home with us on Sundays.
ENQUIRING LADY: And your mother?
ELDEST CHILD: She is the lady he tells us about.

"JACKSON announced his engagement to be married on the day he graduated from college."
"Well, that only goes to show how little you really learn at college."

HOBBS (to prospective chauffeur): Under no circumstances must you run over twenty miles an hour.
UP-TO-DATE CHAUFFEUR: You don't want a motor; you want a man to take you out in a baby carriage.

DRILL-INSTRUCTOR CASEY: Now, min, yez will take one stip to the rare, thin one to the front, thin one to the rare agin, an' yez'll be as yez were before yez were as yez are now!

IN THE ABSENCE OF DANGER SIGNALS.

"No, darling, you've had two pieces of cake, and you mustn't have any more."
"But why, mummie? I don't feel anything yet!"

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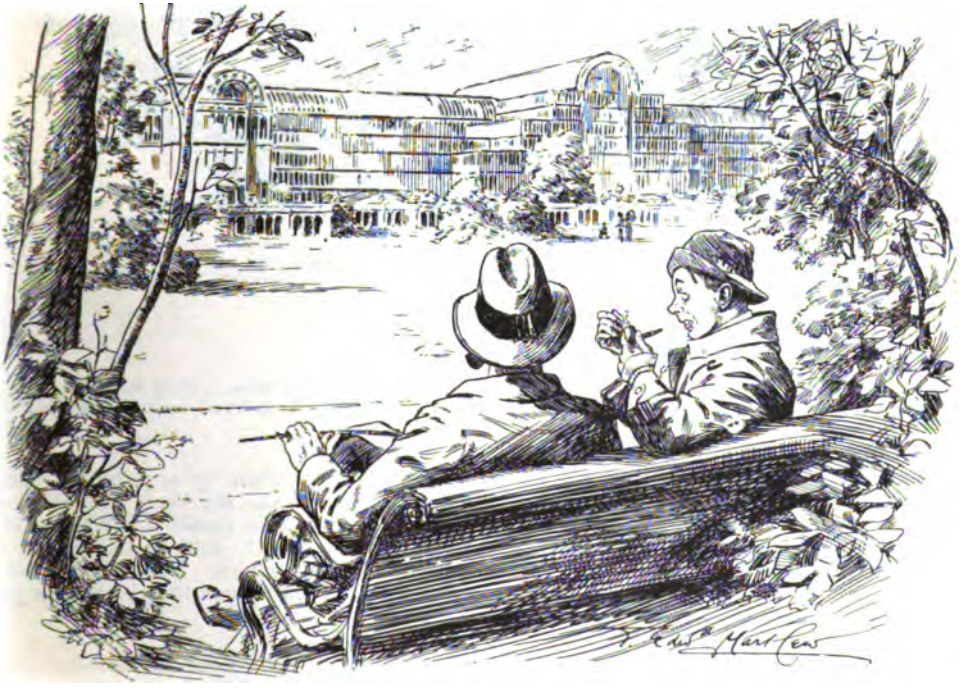
INCONSISTENCY, THY NAME IS MAN!

"THERE, aunt, that's the President of the Simplified Spelling Society."
"Really! What's his name?"
"Smythe."



OVERHEARD AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE.

YOUNG BLOOD (thinking of a recent window-smashing campaign): Say, Alf, wot a beano the Suffragettes could 'ave over there!

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TINNED SALMON.

At the river of Fraser, a long way away, sir,
They catch tons of salmon, you'll grant;
They've an excellent plan—they eat all they can,
And afterwards can all they can't.

But you'll get in a mix and a horrible fix
If you try to explain to your aunt
That though they can't eat all the salmon they can,
They *can* eat the salmon they can't.

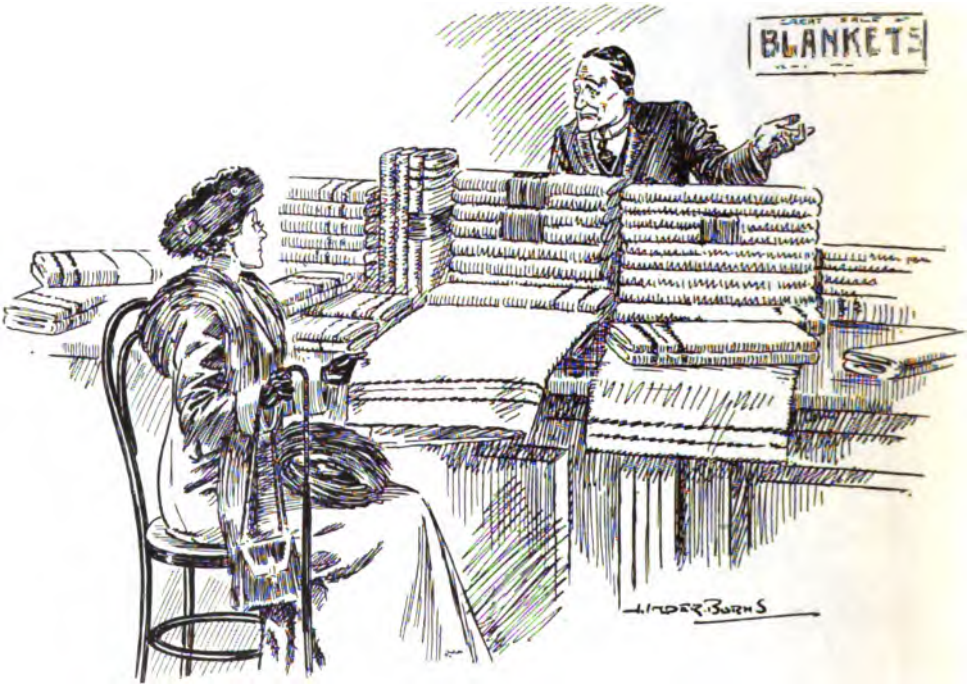
R. H. Roberts.

A MAN says: If the shoe fits, put it on. A woman says: If the shoe fits, get a size smaller.

FIRST BRIDGE FIEND: Mrs. Thompson has fainted away.

SECOND BRIDGE FIEND: How provoking of her! She might have waited until she was dummy.

A LADY asked an old uncle who had been a solicitor, but who had left off business, what were the requisites for going to law, to which he replied: "Why, niece, it depends upon a number of circumstances. In the first place, you must have a good cause. Secondly, a good lawyer. Thirdly, a good counsel. Fourthly, good evidence. Fifthly, a good jury. Sixthly, a good judge. And lastly, good luck."



AFTER SOME TIME.

LADY: Please don't trouble to bring down any more. I'm merely looking through them for a friend.
SHOPMAN (sarcastically): Do let me show you the rest of our stock. Your friend may be concealed amongst the remainder.

MRS. CAMPTOWN: Tell your captain I'd like the pleasure of his company to a dance next Friday evening.

CORPORAL GINNIS: Oi will, ma'am, but Oi'm afraid some of 'em can't dance.

MRS. YOUNGWIFE: What is the first question you ask of a maid whom you think of employing?

MRS. OLDONE: I always say first: "Have you ever lived with me before?"

AN Irishman meeting an acquaintance thus accosted him: "Ah, my dear, who do you think I have just been speaking to? Your old friend, Patrick, faith! And he has grown so thin I hardly knew him. You are thin, and I am thin, but he is *thinner* than both of us put together."

"THERE'S no rest for the wicked."

"Well, they don't want any; they'd rather keep at it."

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"O MISTRESS MINE, WHERE ARE YOU ROAMING?" BY EDWIN ABBEY, R.A.

Reproduced from the original, inspired by the song in Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night," in the Walker Art gallery, in Derivation of the Corporation of Liverpool.

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"THE BOY DAVID PLAYING BEFORE SAUL." BY ERNEST NORMAND.
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MUSIC IN PICTURE.

By Austin Chester.

As with the poet, so with the painter. We listen as the one directs, we look where the other points, and the beauty each arrests comes to us as an additional sense.

Music, which occupies an intercalary portion of our lives, and song, which is music with the subtle weft of thought woven into the woof of sound, touch the highest point of the artistic ideal when they are allied to paint, for then each of the several arts of music, poetry, and paint are blended in unity.

Possibly our primeval forefathers, through some instinct of measure in the human mind, heard in the forces of Nature their first music, since "Nature is the art of God."

> Airs, vernal airs,
> Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
> The trembling leaves.

Milton imagined our great progenitor to have heard

> Cherubic songs by night from neighbouring hills
> . . . . . .
> Singing their great Creator.

"All art," wrote Pater, "constantly aspires towards the condition of music . . . Although each art has . . . its own specific order of impression and an untranslatable charm . . . yet it is noticeable that, in its special mode of handling its given material, each art may be observed to pass into the condition of some other art, by what German critics term an *Anders-streben*—a partial alienation from its own limitations, by which the arts are able not only to supply the place of each other, but reciprocally to lend each other new forces. . . . The arts may be represented as continually struggling after the law or

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principle of music, to a condition which music alone completely realises."

If it is true that "all art constantly aspires towards the condition of music," then surely the painter's art may well be at its highest when it is treating of musical matter, since here should the two arts be dexterously blent into one. Almost it seems that Raphael's "St. Cecilia," at Bologna—which is, perhaps, his greatest work—may be taken as proof of this assertion, for did not Francesco Franzia take to his bed and die from jealousy, because he felt he could never paint any picture to equal it?

all that is great in the universe, and the gods themselves must finally succumb to this destructive process," seemingly forgetful that, while pictorial art exists, the gods still live. Rubens, in his monochrome, "The Birth of Venus," shows a Triton blowing on a conch; Benvenuto, in his "Madonna and Child Enthroned," depicts the angels as playing on musical instruments; Bertucci, in his "Glorification of the Virgin," has two celestial children, one playing on the violin and the other on the flageolet; Simon Marmion, that little-known French painter of the fifteenth century, in his "Choir of Angels,"

"ORPHEUS." BY JOHN M. SWAN, R.A.

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How many beautiful pictures would have been lost to the world, had there not been close association between music and painting, we can gauge by a most cursory view at our National Gallery. Half the beauty of Lippo Lippi's "Adoration of the Magi" would be non-existent without the mounted heralds blowing trumpets on the picture's right. Terburg's "The Guitar Lesson" depends entirely upon music for its inspiration. François Boucher's "Pan and Syrinx" might have been painted with the object of proving Heine wrong when he wrote: "Decay is secretly sapping the strength of

makes use of the long pipes; Wilkie, in his picture "The Blind Fiddler," introduces the violin, and in his "The Bagpipes," that droning instrument of unknown antiquity, which, still a favourite in the Highlands, was used long since by the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. Jan Steen, the famous Dutch painter of the seventeenth century, introduces the harpsichord in his "The Music Master"—an instrument which Sir William Quiller Orchardson, to come to modern work, used with decorative effect in his picture on Shelley's lines—

> "Music, when soft voices die,
> Vibrates in the memory."

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"THE SHEIK'S DAUGHTER." BY N. SICHEL.

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Lord Leighton painted an important picture, "The Triumph of Music," and his "Orpheus Redeeming Eurydice" owes its inspiration to this art. G. F. Watts painted an "Orpheus and Eurydice," but probably his finest work is "Hope"—a symbolic figure sitting on the globe in the dim twilight of the world, with a broken lyre in her hand, from which she "strives to get all the music possible out of the last remaining string."

The alliance so happily found between music and painting was brought about, we are bound to think, by the instrumentality of religion, and we can no more exclude religion from art without art's suffering than we can sever painting from music: the three are inseparable.

So curiously did ancient fable hamper human intelligence, that in the third century the pagan gods were held to have dropped from their high estate, and to have fled from the advance of Christianity to the plains of Picardy; and this time, during which they were supposed to be in exile, synchronises with that of the traditional saint chiefly identified with the art of music, Cecilia. The pagan and the saint are each favourite subjects of the painter's art, and a means by which music is pictorially brought into prominence, thus illustrating the words of Pater, quoted at the beginning of this article, that "the arts are able not only to supply the place of each other, but reciprocally to lend each other new forces."

For the purpose of our present series of reproductions of modern pictures, there, fortunately, are illustrations so comprehensive that they not only touch the three kinds of musical instruments—the percussion, the wind, and the strings—but give us almost all the principal varieties of each.

We get the percussion of drums and cymbals in Mr. T. C. Gotch's "A Pageant of Childhood," and in this picture we advance to the second stage, the wind instrument, for we get the trumpet. In the history of the trumpet, we find that Moses received command to make "two trumpets of silver," that he might "use them for the calling of the assembly and for the journeying of the camps." In the many pictures of Old Testament scenes which artists have painted, they are, therefore, right in introducing the trumpet both in processions and at feasts.

Between the drums and trumpets of Mr. Gotch's picture we ought, if we are to follow the chronological evolution of

"THE QUARTETTE." BY ALBERT MOORE.

Reproduced from a photograph by Messrs. Henry Dixon & Son, Albany Street, N.W.

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"WHEN APPLES WERE GOLDEN." BY J. M. STRUDWICK.

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"WHEN MUSIC, HEAVENLY MAID, WAS YOUNG." BY THE HON. JOHN COLLIER.
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instruments, to insert the themes of Mr. E. F. Britten's "Marsyas and Apollo," Mr. J. R. Weguelin's picture entitled

> "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter,"

and both Mr. J. M. Swan's and Mr. Solomon J. Solomon's pictures of Orpheus; for the lyre and the flute and the pipe were the instruments of the shepherds and the peasants long before the trumpet was introduced.

In Mr. Solomon's picture, which shows the entrance of Orpheus into Hades in search of Eurydice—an entry permitted because of the sweet tones of the music he played

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"HARMONY." BY FRANK DICKSEE, R.A.

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Orpheus holds in his left hand a lyre, which has been vastly improved since Apollo—or Hermes—first stretched the tendon across the tortoise-shell.

Mr. Britten's "Marsyas and Apollo" tells the story of that celebrated piper of Celaenae, in Phrygia, who, after challenging Apollo to a trial of skill, was adjudged vanquished, so bringing about the estimation of stringed instruments as superior to those of wind. Mr. Weguelin shows us Pan as playing but upon one reed, in a picture of a statue of the god, raised, perhaps, when he had not as yet pursued Syrinx and invented the pipe in memory of her, composed of seven reeds.

Remembering that the heroic age belongs to these early times, we should be inclined to include "The Quartette," by Albert Moore, as belonging to that date, so classical is it in quality; but although the viol was a modified form of lute, and this an adaptation of the lyre of antiquity, the violin and the 'cello

"THE LUTE-PLAYER." BY WILLIAM ETTY, R.A.

From the original in the National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, S.W.

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did not come into existence until the middle of the sixteenth century, and Moore's classical atmosphere must therefore be taken as a piece of fantasy.

that the subdivision of song should have come first, inasmuch as the very earliest personified "muses" of classical myth and literature were the goddesses of song, and it

"MARIANA." BY DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

The song "Take, O take, those lips away!" in Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure." From a photograph by F. Hollyer, Pembroke Square, W.

Although we have thus far considered the more general range of music, in so far as it has found expression or celebration in pictorial art, it might be argued

was only in times later than the Homeric poems that their attributes were differentiated between the arts of history, tragedy, comedy, lyric poetry, epic poetry, dancing, and music

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"THE VIOLINIST." BY JOHN PETTIE, R.A.

Reproduced from a photograph by L. Caswall Smith, Oxford Street, W.

in the sense of performance upon musical instruments. But on the principle that "the whole is greater than its part," we are here surveying more particularly those works of art which present some "instrumental" subject in pictorial form, and there thus remains an interesting group of pictures dealing more especially with the art of song. These we hope to reproduce in a second article, and therefore here include but two, choosing pictures by Rossetti and Edwin Abbey, representing two of the most perfect songs of Shakespeare. Yet some of the earliest in chronological order of any such further themes belong conjointly to both groups, and are necessarily mentioned in the present article. The triumphal song of Miriam, for instance, described in Exodus.

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"THE MOONLIGHT SONATA." BY ERNST OPPLER.

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in which her brother, the great law-giver, Moses, and the Israelites celebrated their successful passing over the Red Sea, cannot be considered only as a vocal expression of joy, for we are told that she "took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances." Similarly, although David "being dead, yet speaketh" to us in the great lyrical literature which we know as the Psalms, it was not primarily as singer, but as a skilled player upon sundry instruments that

"Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me," and that, in response, when David, the son of Jesse, was brought before him, and "took the harp and played with his hand, Saul was refreshed." And, again, we know that "David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on all manner of instruments made of fir-wood, even on harps, and on psalteries (a kind of harp), and on timbrels (a drum or tabor), and on cornets, and on cymbals"; that Jeduthun "prophesied with a harp":

BEETHOVEN. BY M. WOLFF.

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he first charmed the distraught mind of King Saul, and later, although he "sang praises," it was "with a psaltery and an instrument with ten strings." Mr. William Gale's picture of "The Song of Miriam" is, therefore, an illustration rather of the visual choric dance of the Israelites, and the paintings by Joseph Israels, Ernest Normand, and other artists, of the boy David singing before Saul, deal rather with his instrumental talents than with his lyrical gift.

We read that Saul said unto his servants:

and, again, that David sang praises "with the psaltery and an instrument with ten strings."

For the next picture of musical interest inspired by the Bible narrative, we must advance to the days of the Captivity, recalled by Mr. Arthur Hacker in his pathetic picture, "By the Rivers of Babylon," in which the lyre and the harp are hushed and neglected, and the singers of Israel, in their exile, could but utter that haunting *cri de cœur*: "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" An interesting contrast

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"STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND." BY ALBERT STARLING.

From the original in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, reproduced, by permission of the Corporation, from a photograph by W. A. Mansell & Co.

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to the Oriental realism of Mr. Hacker's picture may be seen in the idyllic treatment, in the Victorian manner, of the same despairing mood and moment by William Etty, which is now in the Art Gallery of Preston, although the negation of the singing instinct is still more completely emphasised by the earlier painter, inasmuch as he shows us only the despondent daughters of Israel, without including any sign of the harps which they have hung upon the trees. Etty takes his title from the familiar Prayer Book version of the Psalms, "By the waters Manchester Art Gallery, where seven pict... of the earlier painter hang, in instruc... proximity to much of the best work of ... later Pre-Raphaelite countrymen.

Both William Dyce and Mr. E. Bl... Leighton, in their pictures of "Sir Tristra... Harping" and "Tristram and Iseult," br... the harp into the Arthurian era. In the sa... way, choice of subject made Mr. Fra... Dicksee introduce the organ into the er... mediævalism in which he places his pict... "Harmony." Both harp and organ, wh... in these cases add so materially to t...

"A MUSIC LESSON." BY FRANK H. POTTER.

From the original in the National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, S.W.

of Babylon we sat down and wept"; but Mr. Hacker prefers the Bible version, "By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion." Etty's picture is one of his works in which he was most influenced by the Venetian School in his rendering of flesh tints and in his rich use of colour. These were characteristics of his work by which the early Pre-Raphaelite pictures of the next generation were in turn a good deal influenced, notably those of Millais and of Ford Madox Brown, as Mr. Ernest Phythian has pointed out in his valuable notes on the pictures in the beauty of the subjects brought within th... pictures' frames, are of very early origi... We read in Genesis of Jubal, who was t... seventh in descent from Cain, as bei... "the father of all such who handle the ha... and organ."

From the mediævalism of such pictur... as Mr. Dicksee's and Mr. Blair Leigh... we come to Elizabethan times, wi... "The Roundelay," by Mr. Seymour Lu... and now we place the violin, the 'cello, a... the improved lute each in its own per... We see the spinet in the same artist's "T... Interval," an instrument the outcome of t...

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more primitive clavichord, and the precursor of the modern piano, which is depicted in Mr. L. Campbell Taylor's "The Rehearsal," Mr. Frank Dicksee's "Memories," Sir William Quiller Orchardson's "Her Mother's Voice,"

"ANDANTE ESPRESSIVO." BY STANHOPE FORBES, R.A.

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and many another picture of modern life. We are introduced to the guitar in Mr. G. A. Storey's "First Practice," and in Mr. Lockhart Boyle's "The 79th at Waterloo," we are reminded of the droning qualities of that instrument the bagpipes, which is as modern as it is old. The national instrument of Scotland to-day, it is yet referred to, in Samuel x., as having a place with the psaltery, the tabret, and the harp amongst the company of prophets that came down from the high place to meet Saul.

"A Violin Concerto," by John Percival Gulich, deals with the violin, and is informed with the very spirit of musical

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inspiration, and, perhaps more than any picture we have noticed, it, by alienation from the limitations of paint, passes into that condition of the sister art of music by means of what the German critics term *Anders-streben*.

Perhaps the finest expression of a perfect lyric that modern artist has compassed is to be seen in the late Edwin Abbey's beautiful rendering in paint of the Fool's song in Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night"—

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low.
Trip no further, pretty sweeting,
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

So completely does the artist give the whole essence of the situation, that it is not enough to think only of the first two lines of this first stanza, which are always given as the title of the picture in reproduction and in the catalogue of the Walker Art Gallery, at Liverpool, where the original hangs. One cannot resist quoting not only the whole of the first verse, but the whole song by adding—

What is love? 'Tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter—
What's to come is still unsure.
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come, kiss me, sweet-and-twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

Rossetti's "Mariana," with the boy singing the song from Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure," holds much of the poignant emotion of the verses beginning "Take, O take, those lips away!" without conjuring up the Elizabethan atmosphere of the play. Indeed, though professedly illustrating the brief scene of "The Moated Grange at St. Luke's" of Shakespeare's play, Rossetti's picture gives us rather the Mariana of Tennyson's poem. But we hope to explore the interesting subject of Song in pictorial expression in a further article.

"WOODLAND MELODIES." BY N. PRESCOTT-DAVIES.

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ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW.

Being an account, from the hand of an eminent scientific gentleman, lately deceased, of certain circumstances relating to the Harvest Moon, together with an editorial note.

By JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,

Author of "The Garden of Lies," "The Unknown Lady," "Buchanan's Wife," etc.

ELM HOUSE,
WESTFORD, BUCKS.
21 *September*, 1911.

JUSTUS MILES FORMAN, ESQ.,
c/o *The Windsor Magazine, London.*

DEAR SIR,—A friend more accustomed than I to perusing the lighter forms of literature drew my attention, some time since, to a series of articles published in THE WINDSOR MAGAZINE and signed by yourself, which I at once recognised as refurbished and—with apologies—somewhat garbled versions of tales long familiar to me by word of mouth during my years of ethnological investigation among the island groups of the South Pacific Ocean. The preposterous body of legend gathered about that famous pearl known as the Harvest Moon forms, as doubtless you are aware, the greater part of the stock-in-trade of every copra hunter and beach-comber of that part of the world.

With these childish and rubbishy yarns I have, as you may well imagine, little interest and less patience; but it so happens that very recently—within the past month, indeed, and far from the usual field of the Harvest Moon legend—there has come under my observation a "case," if I may so phrase it, which presents very peculiar features, which has interested me, and which you may like to include in your collection.

It gives me, indeed, a kind of mischievous pleasure to make this contribution to the Harvest Moon's adventures, because of my impatience with the voracious appetite displayed by most people towards what is termed "the supernatural." The Harvest Moon has, throughout its career, been popularly credited with supernatural qualities. I have, on many occasions, attempted to point out to credulous and mediæval-minded folk the fact that the extraordinary money value of the gem, and this alone, was sufficient to have made its history a stormy and blood-stained one. I have never convinced anybody, but that was to be expected. One of the greatest difficulties science has to contend with is the fact that nine men out of ten would rather believe in ghosts than disprove them by using their intelligences.

Now I am able to present, in support of my contention, a concrete example of what tradition and credulity can accomplish in a mind as normal and sane and little given to hysteria as that of the average well-educated man. Hence the mischievous pleasure to which I have above alluded.

A few days from the time of my return to my native village, Westford, after an absence of nearly twenty years, I walked, smoking my pipe, through a certain country lane. It was mid-morning, both warm and cool, and there were fresh, pleasant smells and the cheeping of birds, and a dog barked far away, and a boy sang at his work somewhere out of sight, and the distant hills were mottled with cloud shadows.

It was all very different, indeed, from the fierce blue seas and yellow sands and green palms of that part of the world where my investigations had so long detained me, and I remember thinking how much pleasanter it was, and more soothing and more peaceful. It was good to be at home again, and I sighed with deep comfort, and puffed at my pipe, and said to myself, in the manner of one who makes a promise, that it should be long, indeed, before I again left these quiet, grateful scenes and sounds and smells.

I came presently to a barred gate across the lane, and a pleasing young person, in a brief white skirt and a broad white hat, who sat upon it with her back towards me. A short distance away a muddy fox-terrier sat on the ground, with his ears down and his back turned towards the lady. Neither of these two was aware of my approach until I spoke; then the lady turned her head to look at me—but not the fox-terrier, who kept his ears down—and I perceived that she had hair the colour of a bay horse, and eyes the colour of brown sherry, but no freckles. I perceived also that a somewhat large area

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of the front of her white skirt was wet. I said—

"May a harmless elderly gentleman inquire if the lane beyond this gate is forbidden to trespassers?" And the lady laughed at me and said—

"It is. Moreover, there are wild beasts infesting it who roll in the mud and then jump on your pretty white skirt under pretext of showing their affection for you, so that you have to go to the brook to wash it off, and sit in the sun until you're dry."

"That lane is no place for me," said I, shaking my head. "I thank you many times for your warning. Perhaps you would allow me to stand here a few moments instead, while you are drying. Perhaps you would even allow me to introduce myself, unless, indeed, we have already met, for, as I look further upon you, your face is strangely familiar. It is possible that I knew you when I lived in Westford twenty years ago?"

The lady laughed once more, not unbecomingly, and said—

"Twenty years ago, kind stranger, I had not yet seen the world. Perhaps you are thinking of a previous life."

"Perhaps I am," said I. "Now that I reflect, I think the period I have in mind was some three thousand years back, and the place an island called Scheria, and you were, if I may mention it, engaged in much the same occupation."

The young person with bay hair wrinkled her nose in thought, but presently said—

"Oh, yes, indeed! Nausicaa, the youthful laundress—I remember perfectly. But I have changed my name for a shorter one, and they call me nowadays Anne Bride, and my mother was Anne Wickham. I think it was she you knew twenty years ago. *You've* changed your name, too, haven't you? I think you must be Mr. Peter Harvard, and you know all about several millions of brown gentlemen who live on page seventy-nine of my school geography. My mother has very often talked to me about you when we've read your name in the newspapers or the reviews, and Tommy Allen has told me how you taught him to ride and shoot almost before he could walk. I've known you so long and so well, Mr. Harvard, that I think I might perhaps be allowed to call you 'Mr. Peter,' because I like the name."

"My very dear child," said I, "you shall call me anything in the world that you like if you are Anne Wickham's daughter, and I think I have known you long enough and well enough to kiss you on both cheeks." Which I at once did with great warmth and satisfaction.

Now, far back in the dawn of the world, when I was possessed of human emotions like other people, I had loved Anne Wickham, but lost her to another—a commonplace fellow. I had a friend, too—young Tommy Allen's father, now long dead, and it was true that I had taught the boy to ride and shoot almost before he could toddle. I felt as though ghosts with sweet, old-fashioned faces were reaching out their hands to me from a forgotten world, and I had to remind myself that I do not believe in ghosts.

Anne Bride—one time Nausicaa, the youthful laundress—walked back to the village with me—Mr. O'Houlihan, the fox-terrier, accompanied us, but a little apart and with averted eyes—and we talked about her mother—now, I learnt, a widow—and about young Tommy Allen. I thought I detected in the maiden some self-consciousness over this latter character, and I bore down upon him a little to see what would come to light. She was by nature a frank lady, and, I fancy, had long wanted a sympathetic ear. She squeezed my arm between her hands and leaned against it as we walked. She said—

"I don't mind telling *you*, Mr. Peter, that I'm not very happy. I thought—you see, he used to look and say things that made me think—oh, well, I dare say I was a fool! But it was true. I *know* it was true. Women always know about that kind of thing. He did care once. I know he cared. And, oh, Mr. Peter, so did I—so much—so much! I was only waiting for him to speak. Then he and his father both got ill with typhoid. His father died, and poor Tommy was very, very bad for a long time, so that as soon as he could stir, they sent him away for a sea voyage to get his strength back. He went to *your* part of the world—did you know?—the South Pacific Islands, and was there for five or six months. Then last spring he came back—and he was quite changed. Something had happened—I don't know what. He's very sweet to me now whenever we meet, but it's a different kind of sweetness. I can't explain. Everybody has noticed the change in him—it isn't just towards me. He used to be so gay and witty and fond of fun. Now he goes about looking like a ghost, and I haven't heard him laugh for months. It breaks my

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heart to see him like that. It would break yours, too, Mr. Peter."

I said—

"Bless me, child, I haven't any heart! I'm a celebrated ethnologist, not a man. But I'm as sorry as sorry can be to hear all this about Tommy Allen. I must have the boy to dinner and make him talk. Perhaps I can get out of him what the trouble is. I promise you I'll try."

That seemed to please her, for she squeezed my arm once more in the most grateful fashion, and said I was a "dear Mr. Peter," and refused to believe I hadn't any heart.

We came to her gate in the leafy village street, and she pressed me to enter, saying that her mother would be delighted to see me. I hesitated, but in the end declined. I should, of course, have to meet Anne Wickham later on, if I was to remain in Westford, but I felt myself to be, on this day, in a softened and reminiscent mood. It wouldn't do, I said, to go meeting old loves in that mood. My life was settled and determined, my mind at peace.

"Let them be," said I to myself.

I had been, however, much interested to learn of young Tommy Allen's sojourn in the South Pacific. The boy might have let me know. Though not in that part of the world at the time, I could at least have provided him with information and useful letters. I dispatched a note asking him to dine with me on this very day, and he accepted and came.

He was so astonishingly like his father, the friend I had loved and quarrelled with, and lost long since, that he gave me quite a shock.

Ghosts again, reaching out their hands across the abyss of time.

He was a pleasant boy, with gentler manners than his father had had, very intelligent, I thought, and with a flattering air of deference to my years and wisdom. He hadn't forgotten those early lessons in the manly accomplishments, and asked if he might still call me Uncle Peter. I said, "Good Heavens, yes, I should think so!" and wondered for a moment how it would seem if my life had so been ordered that some fine, handsome lad like this might call me "father" instead of "Uncle Peter."

Only for a moment, though. Heaven knows, I have concerns enough to occupy me without the responsibility for other lives added on!

I found myself liking young Tommy. If one were to have a son—— Well, "Uncle Peter" isn't a bad name. I bore in mind Miss Nausicaa Anne's words about him, and watched for signs of what she had so deplored. He *was* a grave youth. No doubt about that. I observed that he seldom smiled, save in politeness, and never laughed. There was a settled melancholy upon him, an Early-Victorian, Sorrows-of-Werther look, such as young men used to affect long, long ago to show how desperately they were saturated with *Weltschmerz*. But you don't see that sort of thing nowadays. Thank Heaven, it has passed away! Besides, this melancholy of my young friend seemed to me to have a special character. If I were a fanciful man, which I am not, I should say that he had the look of one haunted or hunted—obsessed by some secret fear.

We talked island talk for a time, and I found that he had not travelled very extensively or very far off the beaten road in the Pacific. I could have arranged for him a much more interesting itinerary, but I found he had been too shy to apply to me after so many years of absence. Then, to try him, I remarked that I had that morning made the acquaintance of a very handsome and charming maiden, and told him her name. Young Tommy flushed, looked away, and presently said that, while unaware of what good fortune might have come my way during the past twenty years, he felt sure no more precious boon had been vouchsafed me than the accident of this encounter. I said—

"She spoke well of you, Tommy." And, to my great embarrassment, the boy gave a kind of dry sob and cried out—

"For Heaven's sake, Uncle Peter, don't talk to me of Anne Bride! I can't bear it."

I dare say I might, with a little pressing, have had the whole thing out then and there, but I'm no meddler. It is my instinct to let other people's affairs alone. And, after all, these two were, in a sense, grown up. One might suppose them able to conduct their own lives without elderly interference. I lighted another cigar and changed the subject.

We met rather frequently after this. Young Allen lunched or dined with me two or three times, and I once or twice with him. Also we took several long walks together. He had the type of mind that most pleases me. He asked for information, and appeared to consider it well, then store it away in the proper pigeon-hole. He asked intelligently, too, and showed that he had read with some discretion. He pleased me

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so much that I once sounded him on the matter of an expedition I proposed making, later on, into New Guinea, and said I should be glad to have him with me. He gave a little laugh singularly devoid of mirth, and said—

"Not on any earthly consideration, Uncle Peter! I should wreck you. I should smash you up. I should ruin the whole thing. I'm unlucky. But I thank you, just the same."

Unlucky! I was very cross with him. I told him he talked like a vapouring woman, like a school-girl; and young Allen said yes, it sounded like that, but he knew what he was about. And he was so politely stubborn over it that I all but left him to finish his walk alone. I asked him, when I had cooled a bit, if he seriously believed in such an outworn fetish as "bad luck," and he said—

"I didn't up to a few months ago. Now I do."

He had brought out a rook rifle that day to pot at troublesome birds. It was a cheap, old-fashioned weapon, made in Belgium or Germany, with the simplest of thumb levers to close the breech—such an arm as you see in roadside shooting-galleries, only of greater calibre. Shortly after the above conversation, the young idiot took a shot at a crow, missed, put in another cartridge, forgot to close the breech, and received a tearing scratch across one cheek. He might as easily have lost an eye or, for that matter, his life. He lowered the rifle and laughed.

"You see, Uncle Peter, I told you I was unlucky. Something like that happens to me about twice a week."

"I see," said I angrily, "a piece of utterly imbecile carelessness! *I'm* not unlucky, but if I should try to fire a rifle with the breech open, I should get all my teeth knocked through the back of my head."

"Ah," said my young friend, in the tone of one who has the best of an argument, "but *you* wouldn't forget to close the breech, and neither should I have forgotten it a year ago."

What can you say to talk like that?

He was obsessed by this ridiculous idea that misfortune followed him. He was determined to make a tragedy of it. I chanced to overhear, a day or two later, some words of a conversation between him and Anne Bride. I had been asleep in a field, with my head against the sloping side of a sunny rock, and awoke to the sound of voices which I at once recognised. I should have made my escape if possible. I should at least have made my presence known, but the voices were so very serious that I knew I should be the cause of great embarrassment if I did either of these two things, and so remained where I was, hoping that the two young people on the other side of the tall rock would go away without discovering me, which happily they, after a time, did.

I have the impression that Allen was speaking when I first awoke, but, if so, his words failed to reach my consciousness. I heard Anne Bride say—

"Tommy, I rather think I shall go away for a bit. The Varings want me to go to Rome with them for the autumn and winter. They spoke of it last week, and I said: 'Why not?'"

A traditional play, as you see, and lacking perhaps in originality. But the old moves are often the best. Tommy took the bait like a starved fish in the spring-time. I could fairly *hear* him turn pale and look stricken to the heart. He said in a scared voice—

"Anne! Great Heavens! The autumn and winter? Six months? D'you really mean it? What in the world is to become of *me?*"

"You?" asked Anne Bride. "Why, what good am I to you nowadays, Tommy?" She seems to have frightened him off his guard, for he burst out into the most impassioned and at the same time flowery description of just what good she was to him. I gathered that she was meat and drink, air and water, sunshine and shade, all things good and beautiful and true. She couldn't, in short, have been more, not if she'd tried ever so. I mustn't poke fun at my young friend's love-making, though. It was a fine speech, and as honest and sincere as the boy himself. But when he had finished—and in my mind's eye I could see Anne Bride, all softened and tender and tremulous, waiting for what was to follow—he gave a kind of smothered groan, as if he had clapped his hands over his face, and cried out—

"No, no, I don't mean that! That's not true, Anne. I've no right to say that to you—nor to anyone. I'm a filthy blackguard to say it! It's a lie, Anne—it's a lie!"

To this extraordinary and seemingly insane speech Anne Bride said quietly—

"No, it isn't, Tommy dear. It's the sober truth, and, thank Heaven, I've made you say it at last! Now I know that you

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care, and I can be happy again. Of course, I don't know what dreadful thing it is that has happened to make you so sad and depressed and bitter. Perhaps I never shall know—perhaps it will have to be between us always—but I can bear even that if only I know that you care."

He said, "Anne—Anne!" in a heart-broken tone, and Anne Bride strove to comfort him in that magical way women have at such crises. I remember she said that it might be the cloud hanging over him would pass in time, and I remember young Allen replied very bitterly—

"Never, Anne—never! I'm done for. You'd best go away and forget me if you can."

There was more brave and comforting talk from that fine girl, and after a bit the two left their places and went away together. I waited five minutes, to get them out of sight, and went on myself homeward, very low in my mind, and wondering what in the world had befallen young Allen to make him take such a tragic view of his life.

I fished up and rejected any number of wild and improbable theories—some dreadful crime committed in a moment of passion, some entanglement, or even a marriage that couldn't be openly acknowledged. These things, alas, do now and then come into the lives of the best-intentioned. I remember that I reached home in a vile humour, and flew into a rage with my excellent cook over a burnt chop. The cook gave notice.

Then for a few days my mind was diverted by the arrival in the village of a friend, one Arthur Raleigh, who had, some four years back, worked with me in my ethnological investigations through the Gilbert and Ellice groups, and was now making a visit to old Colonel Polson, his cousin. There had been talk of our returning together to the Marshall group, and I was rather in hope that this visit of Raleigh's might bring the project to a consummation.

It didn't, I may say. And I confess myself a good deal disappointed in my friend. He had always been a silent fellow, none too cheerful or expansive, but I now found him taciturn almost to the point of habitual gloom, and could rouse little interest in the man over the plan that meant so much to me. I introduced him to young Allen, and, rather to my surprise, the two struck up an immediate friendship and spent much of their time together. I asked young Tommy once what he and his new companion found to talk about, and he said, after some reflection, that he didn't believe they talked at all.

It was, I think, about ten days after Raleigh's arrival among us that I had a quiet little dinner-party. There were Mrs. Bride and Anne, Mrs. Polson—the Colonel being laid up with sciatica—Raleigh, Tommy Allen, and myself. It was from the beginning an unsuccessful party, for Raleigh either couldn't or wouldn't make an effort; Mrs. Polson was a shadowy old soul, incapable of initiative; Tommy Allen was depressed and looked ill; and Anne Bride had her beautiful eyes on him, full of that yearning pity which may be and doubtless is a divine thing, but comparatively useless at the dinner-table. Her mother and I made feeble jokes and talked of auld lang syne, but succumbed early to the prevailing gloom.

A ghastly feast.

It was, I suppose, chiefly my chagrin over all this that led me to baiting Tommy Allen on the subject of what I termed his new Sorrows-of-Werther pose. I meant it good-naturedly enough, but I can see now that I was clumsy and vastly overplayed the jest. I remember Anne Bride looked up with puzzled, half-shocked eyes, and once even ventured a mild protest in Tommy's behalf. Still, all due provocation granted and allowed for, I am quite at a loss as to what it was that at last wrung from him the surprising confession—the secret he had so long and so jealously guarded. I can only surmise that he was, for unknown reasons, in a highly nervous state, and that my ill-judged taunts were in the nature of a last straw.

He turned quite white, looked at me for an instant across the table, and said—

"You think I'm putting on a sort of cheap De Musset pose. You think I'm pulling a long face and hinting at a secret sorrow to look interesting, don't you? Good Heavens!" He began to shiver in the most absurd way.

"I tell you I am a Wandering Jew! I'm everything the evil eye means! I'm a walking pestilence! I'm under a curse! I used to laugh at curses as you do now, Uncle Peter, but I don't laugh any more, and no more would you if you were in my place. My life is a living hell! Thank Heaven, it won't last long! Every day for five months I have expected to die by violence before sundown, and I've hoped and prayed that I might die before I committed some horrible crime or suffered some unspeakable dishonour, as the others like me have done. Do you

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know what the Harvest Moon is? Yes, of course you do. Well, I've got it round my neck."

Now, I have already explained with some emphasis that I have no belief in, and small patience with, the quantity of rubbishy legend that has clustered round this famous gem; but I shall not attempt to deny that young Allen's avowal, made as it was in this melodramatic manner, roused in me some emotion. I confess I uttered an exclamation of some force and pushed back my chair. I should, I believe, have done the same had he informed me the Cullinan diamond or the Russian crown jewels were in his coat-pocket.

The Harvest Moon!

I stared at young Tommy Allen with, I dare say, projecting eyes, but he had bent his head and buried his face in his hands.

It was left to old Mrs. Polson to add a sort of ghastly piquancy to the scene. She was a little deaf, and, raising one cuffed hand to her ear, asked, smiling politely—

"What was it you said you had about your neck, Mr. Tommy?"

It was as if the lad had been describing with proper emotion a peculiarly atrocious murder, and this dear old lady had inquired—

"What was it you said you did with your little friend?"

From sheer nervousness I burst out with a kind of guffaw which rang loudly upon that strained silence. But young Allen, after a moment, looked up and answered—

"The Harvest Moon, Mrs. Polson. You wouldn't know about it." He glanced helplessly about the table from face to face, and ended with me.

"You tell them!" he begged in a weary voice. "I can't." I said—

"It's a famous pearl well known south of the equator. It's believed to be unlucky." And at that Anne Bride cried suddenly—

"I know—I know! Oh, Tommy!" She'd been reading the yarns about the Harvest Moon that have found their way into print.

I don't remember what it was that caused me to glance just then towards Raleigh, who sat two places away from me, but I did look there, and the man was leaning forward, with his arms upon the table, staring at Tommy Allen. His face was white and working—a dreadful face that well-nigh frightened me. He said in a kind of hoarse whisper—

"It's not true! That's not true!"

"Would you like to see it?" the boy asked, still in his tired, flat voice. The weather being hot and the occasion informal, we men were in dinner-jackets, and Allen had on one of those soft-pleated shirts that young men affect. He reached inside this and withdrew an oval silver locket, which he detached from its chain and opened. He removed a wrapping of soft dark silk and laid upon the tablecloth a very large pear-shaped pearl, pink with purplish, bluish lights in it.

I confess to something like a shock of disappointment. I don't quite know what I had expected the Harvest Moon to look like—something wild and weird and uncanny. I dare say—something flashing with baleful lights, radiating about it an atmosphere of mysterious charm and allurement. But if I failed in admiration of the gem whose wonders had so often and so long assaulted my ears, there were others to bow down before it. I heard Anne Bride's mother cry out in a kind of ecstasy, and old Mrs. Polson exclaimed—

"How very pretty, to be sure! It must be most valuable, isn't it?"

Anne Bride stretched out her hand, but young Allen said quickly—

"Don't touch it, Anne—don't touch it!" And she withdrew her hand.

I looked towards Raleigh, and, to my great relief, that dreadful look had gone from his face, and he was smiling easily.

"It seems to me," said he, "that the Harvest Moon has altered since I saw it last. May I have a closer look? I take the responsibility on my own shoulders." Tommy Allen made no protest, and he took the pearl up in his hands, examined it an instant, and put it back on the cloth.

"May I ask one question? Did you buy it?"

"No," said young Allen. "The Harvest Moon has never, I think, been bought or sold. I came by it honestly enough by gift from a man who was dying in Fatuhiva."

"You believe it has brought you ill fortune?"

Young Allen shrugged his shoulders.

"You know the history of the Harvest Moon," said he, and Raleigh nodded, looking at him intently.

"I dare say you'd be glad to be rid of it. Why haven't you thrown it away—buried it—sunk it in the sea?"

"I've tried to more than once," said the boy. He looked down and up again. "I couldn't." And at that the elder man nodded again gently, saying—

"I know—I know."

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"There were others to bow down before it."

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"I think," said he, smiling—"I think I can do you a good turn. I shall be very glad to do somebody a good turn, for I've done bad ones, and shall do bad ones again before I die. Take that object between your thumb and finger and squeeze it hard!"

Young Allen stared at him for an instant, took up the great pink pearl and did as he had been told.

And the Harvest Moon crushed under his grip like a nut. The thin iridescent surface of it scaled and shivered away in a million tiny fragments—in fine opalescent dust—and there was left between his fingers a lump of whitish wax.

"I've heard of that sham before," said Raleigh. "A man who had seen it told me. It was made by a jeweller in Sydney five years ago, and put in a show-case to give people an idea of what the Harvest Moon looked like. Then it was stolen, and got somehow north into the islands. I wonder how many poor devils have been fooled by it?"

Young Tommy Allen looked from the lump of wax between his hands and the tiny heap of pink *débris* about it up to meet Raleigh's eyes, and back, and up again. His face was dark red, and his fingers twitched and worked. He seemed angry—just plain angry.

"Do you mean to tell me," he demanded in a belligerent tone, "that I have been carrying a—a glass bead about for five months under the impression that it was the Harvest Moon? Do you mean to say that all I've gone through with—suffered during that time, has been moonshine—poppy cock—sheer imagination? Do you mean to say I've really been as free as air from first to last?" He gave a sort of bellow, and beat on the table with his fists.

"No man is free who imagines himself in prison," said Raleigh. "As for the glass bead, it seems to speak for itself, doesn't it?" Allen beat on the table again and made use of language unfit for ladies' ears. But I think no one minded. However, I said to him—

"It seems to *me*, my lad, that instead of pounding this table like an enraged board-chairman, and bellowing like an angry bull, you ought to be down on your marrow-bones thanking Heaven for an unlooked-for release from gaol—even if the gaol was of your own building. That's what it seems to me you ought to be doing." He stared at me quite wildly for an instant, began to laugh and stumbled up to his feet. He laughed again, as hysterically as any school-girl, bent his look towards another quarter of the table, cried—

"Anne! Anne!" clapped his hands to his head, and abruptly bolted from the room.

I said, smiling, to Mrs. Bride—

"I think there's but one of us here who can minister to *that* mind temporarily diseased." Anne was already on her feet, looking where Allen had disappeared. Her mother said—

"Go to him, if you want to, child." And she was off like a homing bird.

Half an hour later we oldsters, peering with caution out through the back windows of the dining-room, saw two young people walking close together in the moonlight, and knew that all was well.

Well, there is my story. It shows you, or ought to do, what tradition and belief and imagination can accomplish—a sane young man worrying himself into his grave over a pink glass bead! But I suppose you who like to dandle ghosts before your mind's eye will get round the matter somehow. To me the experience of young Thomas Allen is a death-blow to the Harvest Moon myth—or would be if that myth had ever possessed any life to kill.

I have just a little more to tell. It is no part of the above relation, but I set it down here because it has to do with the Harvest Moon, and because it is, to me, far the most surprising feature of an unusual story.

Raleigh and I sat for some time smoking together in my library after my other guests had departed. I asked him—

"Why did you call young Allen a liar—or words to that effect—when he said he owned the Harvest Moon, and why did you so promptly pronounce his glass bead a sham?" Raleigh was silent for a little time, then said with an odd laugh—

"For the best of all possible reasons. The Harvest Moon is in my possession, and has been for more than a year. It was not given to me by a dying man; I did murder to get it, and I have, since that time, twice taken life to retain it. Just what is in store for me in the future I don't know—violence, crime, sudden death, I suppose—the usual history."

Well, I have lived many years in primitive and savage communities. I didn't start away from my friend in horror, nor denounce him, nor telephone for the police. I felt a sense of great exhilaration, and said—

"I wish I might see it. I don't believe the fairy stories about it. I don't believe it

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to be unlucky nor in any way different from other pearls, but I should very much like to see it."

Raleigh reached, as Tommy Allen had done, within his clothing, brought out from some secret hiding-place a little leather pouch, took from that a wrapping of green silk, and laid before me the Harvest Moon.

Now, I am not a lady novelist. I cannot gush. I cannot rhapsodise. I cannot pile adjective upon adjective. I can say only that, in so far as its physical appearance is concerned, I had not been told the half of the Harvest Moon. It lay in my mellow lamplight and glowed there a perfect, an indescribable thing—the beauty and splendour of all the world reduced to an essence and imprisoned in a shimmering pear-shaped drop of nacre an inch long.

Believe me, the Harvest Moon stands in no need of the romantic and impossible qualities that have been ascribed to it. Its sheer beauty is enough to have set men at other men's throats for its possession. And as for mystery, is not all great beauty mysterious?

It was three days ago that I saw it, and I confess it has not left my thoughts by day. I confess I have dreamed of it by night.

To own such a wonderful, such an amazing thing! To have it always in one's possession! To hold it worshipfully between one's hands and say—

"This unearthly splendour is mine—for ever mine!"

I have moments of unreasoning rage over the thought that Arthur Raleigh, a dull soul at his best, should own that incomparable treasure, and not I.

* * * * *

There is the whole of the communication received by me from the eminent scientific gentleman, whose name I have, of course, felt obliged to omit. I publish the manuscript as it came to me, without excision or addition, without comment. He naturally takes the scientist's point of view about that pearl known as the Harvest Moon, and he is doubtless right. My own opinion I have never expressed. I am not sure I have one. In transcribing the stories about this famous gem, I have acted simply as a reporter; I wrote what was told me.

Dr. ——'s manuscript came to my hand by post not an hour after I had read in my morning paper a not very detailed account of his sudden death in the village the name of which I have chosen to alter to Westford. There was subjoined a brief appreciation of the gentleman's life and work, from which I learnt that he was one of the four or five leading ethnological scholars of the world, and the recognised authority on the brown races of the South Pacific islands. The list of honorary degrees and fellowships in learned societies was most imposing.

That naturally seemed to close the matter. An eminent scientific gentleman had written an account of an experience especially interesting to me, and had since died. But I found, as the day wore on, that the newspaper account of his death—while cleaning a revolver—stuck in my mind, and recurred again and again to my attention. Middle-aged gentlemen of that type do not shoot themselves while cleaning revolvers.

I found the last words of his manuscript haunting me.

On the next day I ran down to the village I have called Westford, and made inquiries, representing myself as a scientific colleague of Dr. ——'s. I saw and talked with a number of people — among them Mrs. Bride, her daughter—one of the most beautiful young ladies it has ever been my privilege to look upon—and young Tommy Allen. These three appeared deeply grief-stricken, were suspicious and loyal to their dead friend, and would say almost nothing. But in the end I fell partly by accident upon an elderly lady, the Mrs. Polson of the manuscript, from whose garrulous lips I got as much of the truth as, I think, ever will be known.

Dr. —— had not suffered from an accident while cleaning a revolver. He had been shot and instantly killed by his friend Raleigh at 2 A.M. in Raleigh's sleeping-room in Colonel Polson's house, which room he had entered by means of a ladder and an open window.

Nobody could even imagine why the unfortunate gentleman should have been there at that strange hour and in that burglarious manner—least of all Mr. Raleigh, who, overcome by grief at his act, had left the village as soon as released by the coroner on the evening of the same day.

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ON SPECIAL SERVICE.

By OSWALD WILDRIDGE,

Author of "Margery Manesty," "Paul Musgrave," etc.

T was full three days since the sea-born fog had swept across the tawny banks of the Great Burbo, and now the Mersey was just as a giant shorn of his strength and robbed of sight. All its confidence was sapped, its lusty activity stilled; over all its breadth, from Sandon Slack to Wallasey Pool, down all its length from the rocks of Seldom Seen and the shoals of the Devil's Bank to the wild expanse of Zebra Flats, the horror of blindness lay upon the waters and overspread the land. Through the colossal maze of the docks men walked with the fear of the unseeable in their hearts; out in the fairway homebound ships groped their uncertain way from buoy to buoy, or plucked impatiently at their anchors, awaiting the hour of release.

According to the gossip of the wharves, the river was full of ships, and according to the volume of the lamentation, gossip was this time a bearer of the truth. In the core of the ponderous mass ship cried to ship, their voices blended in a rare barbaric chorus, a chorus of many harmonies and countless discords—the majestic, full-throated blare of the ocean liner, the wheezy cough of the tramp, the shrill pipe of the coaster, the multitudinous clang of ineffective bells, and loud above all other sounds the dolorous bellow of the Bootle Cow on the North Wall: "Br-a-ay! Br-a-ay! Br-a-ay!" Seconds of silence, and again: "Br-a-ay! Br-a-ay! Br-a-ay!"

Three days of it. A burden of blindness, of suffocation, of clamour, the life of the river stricken, and now the nerves of men were as tautened strings. Even Robert Hutton, skipper of the tugboat *Triumph*, was leaning to rebellion, and when he spoke, his words had a querulous tang.

Now, Hutton is a man with many points of distinction, but if he is conscious of fame, he makes no boast. He has given all his life to the sea and ships, and may therefore be classed with the old salts, but he is one of those in whom the individual has been developed at the expense of the type. He is a sea-dog with few of the sea-dog's manners—he rarely barks, and still more seldom bites. It is only in the hour of crisis, when decision must be swift and action tread upon the heels of thought, that you realise the commanding power of the man; at all other times he is soft as silk, friendly and free from bluster, so that when he leans over the bridge rail and hails the deck, it is a matter of "Are you ready there with the rope, laddies?" and when he gives the course to the mate, it is "Port your hellum, my son," or "Small starboard, my boy."

Moreover, he is entered on the register as captain of the tugboat *Triumph*, but it is only the stranger who bestows upon him the title of his rank; by the rest, through all the purlieus of Liverpool docks, he is ever greeted as "Robert," and by that name chiefly is he known. Also, he consorts with some of the mightiest princes of the sea—often in idle hours between tides, while his tug snuggles in by the giant hull, awaiting the call for service, he is given the seat of a welcome guest in their chart-rooms—and the captains of Atlantic fliers, as they wing their way towards the ocean, wave their hands in genial salutation, which is simply their way of saying "S'long, Robert!" and when they return, they wave again as they who would remark, "Glad to see you, Robert." It is said of him also that he is above all flurry, and in the Liverpool river they have a tale of how he picked up a maimed liner west of the Fastnet, and held her for five days against a storm that would have blown her out into the waste, and how at the end of the five he came off the bridge with a joke on his lips. But now the fog seemed to have soaked all the buoyancy out of him, and, like the rest, he growled and grizzled.

"It's the worst kind of mush, is this," he

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declared. "It isn't thick enough t' keep ships out, and it's too thick for 'em t' get in with comfort, and it's going to last till th' Day o' Judgment."

He was about to say more, when the pack suddenly darkened, as though night itself was settling upon us at a bound. Hutton laid his hand on the telegraph lever, and the *Triumph* went astern. To the blackness ahead the weird outlines of a phantom ship were given; huge and threatening she loomed across the track, then sheered past, and, as she went by, a shower of abuse, launched from her navigating bridge, spattered upon our undeserving heads.

"That's the tug's reward," Robert Hutton grumbled, and then sardonically added: "But she needn't be so perky. She may manage t' pick an anchorage by herself, but she'll be as helpless as the rest when it comes t' docking—she'll never reach her berth without a tug."

Hard in her wake a spectral squadron crowded—a blue-funnel boat from Yokohama, a P.S.N. from the far side of the Horn, a grey-hulled Shire liner, a Manchester cotton boat bound for the Canal. One by one they crawled into port upon the flood, swiftly they vanished in the deeper depths beyond our ken. They had reached their haven, but not yet were they at home.

With the tide marking half-flood, however, the unexpected happened; there was a fluttering of the curtain at its base; the river seemed to rise to us. Then the higher strata slightly thinned. This was not life, but at least it was the promise of it.

"Nothing likely to stir yet, cap'n," I suggested; but Hutton shrugged his shoulders, and declared that he had docked ships in a "thicker mush than this."

A spell of eager waiting, and then—

"*Triumph*, ahoy!"

A hidden man with a megaphone was speaking us from the north-west.

"That's Barwise," said the skipper, and he swung about with his response.

"Ahoy there! That the *Trojan?*"

"Aye. Orders for you, Robert. Th' *Argonaut's* t' dock Sandon way. We've t' fetch her in. *Triumph* forrad, *Trojan* on th' port quarter."

"Where's the hooker lying?"

"Don't know—nobody knows. We've got t' play blind man's buff till we find her. She's s'posed to have gone to an anchor t' the sou'-west, and that's all I can tell you."

Somewhere to the south-west—that was all—and we had to go in search. Surely a piece of monumental folly. How could any man find a ship in that dripping, choking, sodden blanket, a nightmare whose horror was completed by the screaming of the sirens, the clangour of the bells. But already the *Triumph* was coming about, and, with the *Trojan* nosing along in her wake, she embarked on her search for a ship that was lying to an anchor in the fog "somewhere t' the sou'-west." If only it had been some other ship! The Mersey was swarming. One after another we raised their giant hulls. First there was that portentous darkening of the fog, and then that blotchy, distorted outline of bow or stern, and afterwards the magnified mass of a prodigious hull, from whose decks unseen men, tetchy, fretful, challenged our passage or plaintively demanded light.

"Is that you, Robert? . . . Man alive, where are we? . . . What's that? . . . Sou'-west of Battery Bank? . . . Right! Go easy. Th' *Mongolian's* anchored right ahead."

Thus we passed them, *Mongolian*, *Ardeola*, *Hostilius*, a fleet of familiars, others with names which only the shipping list had made known to us. Scraping athwart their hulls, dodging under their sterns, we lumbered, and at last, in the midst of the "mush," we came upon another leviathan, under whose bow we cautiously rounded, and when Robert Hutton, with his "Please, Mister Mate," requested the towline, I discovered that the game of blind man's buff was ended. We had hit that indefinite point marked by a ship's anchor "somewhere t' the sou'-west."

A rumble of voices overhead responded to the skipper's call, and afterwards the pipe of a whistle, the grind of a winch, the rattle of the anchor-chain. As the heaving-line whipped through the fog and was hooked aboard the tug, Hutton passed his instructions up to Mister Mate on the foc'sle-head.

"You've t' dock in the Canada, Number Three branch—go in Sandon way."

And then we waited. Twice at long intervals did the anchor-bell make its report of progress; for a third time it spoke, proclaiming that the monster hook was free, and now the liner lifted up her voice, and the *Triumph* went ahead.

From the bridge of the tug the ship following at the end of her leash was merely visible. Loftily she reared her stem above us, threatening destruction, but abaft her foremast all detail was lost. High on her navigating bridge we knew that the pilot was standing by the captain's side, but it

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was only when the siren talked that we had any demonstration of his presence or his power; also we knew that the leadsman was perched on his own projecting platform, ceaselessly swinging his tell-tale cord, for, as we edged through the murk, his sonorous call rang out above all the other voices of the river—

"By the deep . . . By the deep . . . By the mark seven! . . . By the mark five!"

It was the skipper of the tug, however, who dominated attention. In this realm he was the king. He had achieved that which doubt had denounced as impossible. He had ranged through a fog-ridden river and had found a hidden ship. One of the heroes, one of the men who *do* things, he stood now on his tiny bridge, setting the course with a word, the telegraph lever never beyond his reach, his attitude that of the man who is listening with his very soul, watching with that keenness of vision to which the landsman never attains. With all the landmarks wiped out, his movements still seemed to be barren of meaning, but all the time he was working steadily towards his goal. Somewhere on the eastern bank of the river the wall was pierced by a gap ninety feet wide, an easy mark even in the dark of the night, when the leading lights are ablaze; but now the lights were veiled. We were voyaging through chaos. So, until the river pitched its song in a new key—a salvo of sharp, decisive orders volleyed across the water, the *Trojan's* siren shrilled "Pull her t' the west," and behold another wonder had been worked—already we were easing the liner down on the wall in Sandon Slack, where she might be trimmed for her passage of the gates.

An hour later, when the cry of "All's fast!" had set the seal upon her work, the tug returned to her vigil in the river. It was again a river of disappointment, a place of cheated hope, for now the fog happed thicker than ever round the ships which no friendly tug had searched for and rescued, and there they must bide, beating a mad tattoo upon their anchor-bells until the coming of a new tide made them a fresh offer of freedom. As for the tug, she crawled cautiously away to her shelter in the north, and there she snuggled in by the bank, on whose crest presently the sizzling of a beacon flare proclaimed that night was about to ally her black battalions with the fog. Hither also other tugs drifted, and among them the *Turk*, on whose bridge Ben Shepherd held watch with his mate and bitterly berated his lot.

"It's rotten!" we heard him begin, his voice carrying clear over the intervening strip of space. "Weather's rotten, life's rotten, so's everything! Wish I'd shipped in some other trade. Dunno whatever made me take up with tugging. Your day's turned inside out, and it's the tide what's the boss. . . . There's no comfort in the life, and no credit. That's it—no credit. Five per cent. commission on a tow isn't everything . . . A bit of praise 'd be as welcome as money now and again, but it's never there. . . . It's always the other ship what counts. S'pose one of the big boats bumps a rock and rips her hull open; tug comes along just in time, puts a rope on her and helps her into shallow water before she's had a chance o' filling. But whoever hears about the tug? Ten t' one the noospapers mention that it was a tug what did it, without so much as naming her name, and certainly never coming within a cable's length of the skipper's name."

He paused for a spell as the call of a steamer boomed dismally through the fog. "Not that it matters all that much," he began again, "only, if a man's work's worth doing, it's worth putting down in the log. It sort 'o gets you on the raw when it's always the other chap what figgers. I mind when the *Billinge Hill* smashed into a waterlogged timber ship in the dark, and only crawled home in time t' prevent herself going down."

"She was beached, wasn't she?" the mate asked.

"She was run on a sandbank and kept there till the salvage crew got her patched up a bit. As luck would have it, however, she slipped off the bank before they'd finished, and made a bolt for deep water, deep enough t' keep her for ever and ever if she happened t' make a cruise that way. I was standing-by in the *Titan* at the time, and I nipped in and got a rope on her, and then went full speed ahead, and for four-and-twenty hours we held her up right on the edge of the bank, so that, if she did happen t' sink, there'd still be a chance for her. But did anybody ever hear about it? Not a word. There was a rattling song in the papers about the grand bit o' salvage work that was done, but the pore old *Titan* didn't even get herself put into print. She was spoken of as 'a tug,' and that was all. Makes a man feel a bit sick."

"Like earning the Victoria Cross and not getting it," I murmured, and Robert Hutton pronounced a benediction on Ben Shepherd

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nd his work. "It was one of the finest hings that ever a tugboat did. Ben eserved a medal for it. But he shouldn't alk—he growls too much. Talk's all right you know when t' heave-to, but Ben

"'Is the *Triumph* there?'"

doesn't. Listen, there he is, off again on a noo tack!"

"Life doesn't act fair." Deep and strong the voice of discontent drifted across the rail. "There's a heap of good men who seem to have missed the mark, and it's all because they've never had a chance. Men don't always fail 'cause they deserve to—it's chance—sheer chance. I've been docking the *King o' Prussia* t'-day, pulling her and shoving her, and who should be on her fo'csle-head but Samuel Collis, and I'd t' say, 'Please, Mister Mate, this,' and 'Please, Mister Mate, that,' to him, and yet him and me went t' school together, and we shipped together, and we sat for the same exams., and now he's on the fo'csle-head of a liner,

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and I'm on the bridge of a blooming tug! He's had chances what never came my way. That's all the difference there is between us. It's chance what's the king. It hoists some men up, and it runs some men down, and it doesn't take any note of what they can do or what they deserve, and, generally speaking, Jack's as good as his master. As for tugging"—he spat viciously over the side—"it's what I've told you before—all hard labour and not a scrap of honour in it for any man."

Here the skipper of the *Triumph* laid a hand on my shoulder. "Let's go below," he said; "I've had enough. Ben wouldn't talk such stuff if he could see the sun or the stars. It's the fog that's done it. He's got a bank of it on his chest. Fearful thing is fog. 'Sides, what's a man want hankering after honour and praise? If he docks his tow without scratching paint, he's proved his worth, and that's the biggest honour a man can have. And, after all, it's not often that good work does get overlooked. Ben gets his due. You should hear the talk of the docks and the way that shore superintendents and dock-masters handle his name."

We were now by the cabin-companion, and at this moment the patch of yellow light on the brim of the jetty was broken up by the shadowy figure of a man who halted athwart our berth, himself mistily silhouetted in the fog, and hailed us.

"Tugboats ahoy! Is the *Triumph* there?"

"Aye, aye, sir!" It was Hutton who replied.

"Oh, is that you, Robert? You're wanted at the office."

Hutton responded with a wave of the hand. Then he scrambled over the side; of the assembled tugs he made a precarious bridge to the land. Presently we heard the thudding of his boots on the jetty's timber deck. A quarter of an hour later he was back again, and when he spoke, there was a thrill of exultation in his voice.

"I've got my Victoria Cross," he told me. "You heard what Ben Shepherd said—that tugboat work was rotten and a thing without credit, and didn't I make it plain that Ben was talking off the top?"

"What's the news, skipper?" I asked. "I want to congratulate you."

"They've had a couple of Marconi's from the *Magnificent*," he replied. "The first one said she'd got into a pile o' mush off the Welsh coast, and was coming along dead-slow. The second Marconi only had two words in it—mind that, only two words, and neither of them any size—and they reported that the liner wanted a tug t' be hanging about the Bar ready to act the pilot when she comes up the river, in case the weather should still be a bit thick. They also said they wanted the tug t' have a skipper who knows the Mersey in thick weather as well as in clear, one who can pick his course between the buoys with his eyes shut. And, t' wind up, the Marconi mentioned a partic'lar tug, and gave the skipper's name and address."

"And all that was crowded into a couple of words?"

"That's it, my son."

"And those magic words were——"

"I'll tell you. This was what the Marconi said: 'Send Robert.'"

"D'ye mean——"

But he cut me short. "I mean that the *Magnificent* has done me a great honour. I'm the man who's been Marconied for. 'Send Robert.' That's all she said."

Here he skipped lightly up the ladder and rang the stand-by call on the engine-room.

"Surely you're not going off to her now, skipper?" I protested, as I joined him on the bridge. "The fog's as thick as chalk. You could cut it."

"Seems t' me," he retorted, "that you've got a short memory. Didn't I tell you that they wanted a skipper who could do it with his eyes shut? The *Magnificent's* not coming up in this sort o' stuff, but I've got t' be standing-by when she gets t' the Bar." Here he cheerily hailed the deck: "Let go forrad! Let go aft!"

As the *Triumph* swung cantily away from the shore, away from the range of the feeble lights and out into the blackness of the abyss, I heard him mutter—

"No honour in the service! Fash!"

And again, as we raised the first of the beacon-buoys: "Marconied for by a ship of fame . . . 'Send Robert!'"

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AUTUMN MANŒUVRES.

By FRED M. WHITE,

Author of "The Crimson Blind," "The Law of the Land," etc.

THERE was a sound of revelry by night, and"—and Marlshire's chivalry had gathered at Hilsdon Place for much the same purpose as Belgium's chivalry had come together on a more historic occasion. In other words, Sir Geoffrey Hilsdon was giving a dance, and a good many of the officers of the Blue, or attacking, force were present. The country round had been chosen as a mimic battleground, and a great engagement might be expected at any moment. Therefore Madge Hilsdon had seized the opportunity of emulating her Grace of Richmond on the eve of Waterloo.

The dance was in full swing now, and the guests were visibly enjoying themselves. The fine old rooms were looking their best, the famous conservatories had been ransacked, and the floral decorations were in their way a triumph. It wanted an hour to supper-time, a waltz had just finished, and Madge Hilsdon was enjoying the luxury of a whole five minutes to herself. It was a warm evening in September, clear and fine overhead, and most of the windows had been left open for the sake of the grateful breeze. Madge slid across the refectory, where the dancing was in progress, and strolled into the cloister beyond. Here was a grand old quadrangle with a fountain in the centre—a veritable haven of rest in the languid summer days.

It was blissfully quiet there, and Madge was in the mood to go a little further. As she turned to the right, a figure emerged suddenly out of the shadows and grasped her by the arm. She had a fleeting glance of a dilapidated nomad clad in greasy cords, a dim outline of a mahogany-coloured face surrounded by a mass of ragged black beard and whisker. Before Madge could cry out, a hand was clapped to her lips, and she was lifted from her feet as though she had been no more than a feather.

"Don't make a noise!" the assailant whispered. "If you are quiet, you will be perfectly safe in my hands."

The hand was taken from Madge's lips, and she was set gently on her feet again. She was too indignant to be frightened, too absolutely enraged to be conscious of any other emotion.

"How—how dare you?" she panted.

"Well, it was a bit thick, wasn't it?" the miscreant remarked. "If you had only seen yourself standing in the cloister, looking like a ravishing angel in pink chiffon——"

"Jim," Madge cried—"I mean Mr. Sutton, this is a distinct outrage! You have dared to presume upon our—our——"

"Engagement," Lieutenant Jim Sutton said coolly. "You might just as well say it. Oh, Madge, if you only knew——"

"I'll not hear another word," Miss Hilsdon said icily. "I am returning to the house at once. And if my brother Tom imagines that your sister Connie is any less determined than I am, he will find himself bitterly mistaken."

"I can explain," Sutton said eagerly.

"There can be no explanation, Lieutenant Sutton. Gentlemen don't break appointments with ladies, and take chorus girls on the river instead. And, besides, gentlemen would not be hanging about a house at this time of night in a—a *beastly* disguise like yours. We were under the impression that you were both with your regiment. I suppose this is some mad escapade on Tom's part."

"He was always worse than me," Sutton said magnanimously. "Look here, Madge, I can put that river business right in a minute, if you will only listen. You see, poor old Billy Lushington got engaged to one of them, and he was in a pretty considerable funk about it, so Tom and myself thought——"

Madge stamped her little satin-shod foot impatiently.

"I decline to discuss it," she said. "What are you doing here like a tramp? You might be some vulgar poacher."

"Oh, I am!" Sutton said cheerfully. "As

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they say in the melodramas, my lips are sealed. Now, you might do me a little favour, Madge. It may be the last that I ever ask at your hands. With all my faults, I am not lost to all sense of feeling,"

Madge's blue eyes softened ever so slightly.

"You don't deserve it," she murmured, "but if——"

"That's right," Sutton said encouragingly. "Now, does Captain Algy Traske happen to be shaking the light fantastic toe with you to-night? If so, I would have speech with him."

Madge repressed an impulse to laugh. Not that she felt in the least mirthful. This man was incorrigible. It seemed impossible to believe that she had ever loved him, that she had suffered his caresses. And that day in Dovedale, under the shade of the trees, with the stream at their feet——

"I must get back to the house," she said coldly. "I will speak to Captain Traske, and tell him you are here, though why you should have assumed this loathsome disguise——"

"Pearl of the Andes, you will do nothing of the kind," Sutton said hurriedly. "By the love you once bore me, I implore you to be discreet. The fate of a nation may hang upon your silence. Tell Traske nothing. So long as you get him outside, I shall be satisfied. The mere fact that he is my hated rival does not mean that his life is in danger. Not so much as a hair of his precious eyeglass shall be injured. Is it a bet?"

"I detest the man," Madge whispered.

Sutton held out his hands to her. She turned and fled. She stood just inside the ballroom, panting and quivering from head to foot. There was a beautiful tinge of wild rose in her cheeks, her eyes gleamed like the reflection of stars in a forest pool. She posed there, such a vision of dainty beauty, that for two whole minutes Captain Algernon Traske was actually thinking about something besides himself. He came across the room, prim and immaculate, not one line or hair a fraction of an inch out of place. He always reminded Madge of a starched doll. Some inanity in the way of a compliment was on his lips.

"This is our dance, I think," he said. "I ought not to be here at all, don't you know. I've got pressing business on for the general commanding at Farnborough, but, when I received your invitation, I really couldn't refuse. Must be off in an hour, all the same. A sort of Adam turned out of Paradise—what?"

"Then come and get it over," Madge said unkindly.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Jim Sutton had made his way through the shrubbery in the direction of the big wood, where a gipsy caravan was standing. Here was no pampered home of peripatetic luxury, but the genuine thing as seen where the children of Bohemia mostly do congregate. The caravan was exactly as it had been taken over from its previous owners, save that it had been cleansed and sweetened, and the bedding freshly obtained from Tottenham Court Road. Inside the caravan a second swarthy ruffian was lounging, with a clay pipe between a set of beautifully even white teeth.

"What ho, my noble redskin!" he said, as Sutton entered. "How progresses the campaign? You have been so confoundedly long that I began to think that you had fallen into the hands of the treacherous foe. The point is, have you done any good?"

"I *don't* think," Sutton laughed. "I've seen Madge, my boy. Regularly abducted her, Tom. She was pretty haughty, and all that, but on the whole charming. Would not hear a word about Billy Lushington, all the same."

"Oh, confound Billy Lushington!" Captain Tom Hilsdon said impatiently. "We'll put that matter right when we've got time. Did you say anything about Traske?"

Sutton's eyes glowed, but that might have been due to the reflection of the match as he lighted his pipe.

"She hates him, my boy," he said rapturously.

"Now, what have I done," Hilsdon asked piously, "to be tied up in an important mission with an idiot like this?"

"Oh, all right, old chap—don't be ratty! You'd feel just the same as I do if you had a rival hanging about my sister Connie. You can take it easy, knowing that you can go in and win when Connie simmers down, as she's sure to before long. So far as Traske is concerned, I regard him as a danger."

"What—a sister of mine marry that?" Hilsdon cried. "But go on. Did you do any good at all?"

"I did. You've only got to wait, and the immaculate Traske is our very own. Heaven only knows what Madge took me for!"

"Does she know I'm in it, too?"

"Of course she guessed it. Was there ever a gorgeous spree going that we weren't both in? I believe Madge is under the firm

impression that this is a poaching affray. Now, come along and let's hide somewhere near the house till the time for action arrives."

Hilsdon carefully closed the door of the caravan, and a moment or two later the adventurers were hidden in the shrubbery, from whence they could command a view of the cloisters. Presently there emerged the slim, dandy form of Captain Traske, accompanied by a radiance in pink chiffon. Traske was bending over his companion, who seemed to turn away from him with shy bashfulness.

"What are your teeth chattering for?" Hilsdon asked.

"They ain't chattering," Sutton said curtly. "I'm gritting 'em. By Jove, Madge has gone back and left that last rose of summer all blooming alone! He evidently thinks she's going to return. Now, then, it's a case of 'Up, Guards, and at 'em!'"

A pair of arms were wound kindly but firmly round Traske's shoulders, and a gag was thrust in his mouth. Without a word being uttered, he was carried to the caravan and there deposited on the floor. He protested loudly, but his threats apparently had no effect upon the miscreants who had dared to inflict this indignity upon him. That he had not the slightest notion of their identity did not in the least detract from the humour of the situation.

"He's beginning to sit up and take notice," Hilsdon grinned. "Traske, my son, you are the victim of a woman's perfidy. You are not the first brave soldier who, for the sake of a pair of blue eyes, has—well, made an ass of himself, so to speak. Product of an effete civilisation, do you realise that you have fallen into the hands of the foe?"

"Oh, speak in a language the child can understand!" Sutton said. "Algy, dear old son, we want that from you which is dearer than your life, even dearer than your eyeglass. Will you kindly cough up those dispatches which you are taking to the general at Farnborough."

"A joke, isn't it—what?" Traske asked feebly.

"On the part of your general—yes," Sutton grinned. "To pick you out the bearer of dispatches was a stroke of absolute genius. That prince of detectives, Lupin himself, would never have dreamt that you could have been chosen as the bearer of important messages. But you talk, dear boy, and our spies in your camp conveyed the news to us. Did you but know it, we are here officially with the full connivance of our illustrious chief. Like Autolycus, we are snappers-up of unconsidered trifles. In this guise we are going through your lines, gathering honey on the way. For the next day or two, at any rate, you are our prisoner. No clean collars, my boy, no purple and fine linen, not even a bath unless you like to take it in a brook. Will you kindly oblige with those dispatches?"

"I—I haven't got them on me," Traske stammered.

"Always obstinate, even as a child," Sutton said sadly, "and greedy, too. I am very much afraid that we shall have to resort to one of the fine old Eton methods of extracting information."

"I swear I haven't got them," Traske protested. "I only came to the dance for an hour. I arrived at Hilsdon Place in my uniform, and Sir Geoffrey was good enough to let me change there. The dispatches are written in cipher, and are concealed in the lining of a cigarette case. If you will let me go——"

"Not once," Hilsdon said firmly. "Tell me which bedroom you are occupying, and that will be good enough for me. No, you need not go into details. Seeing that I was born in the house, I shall be able to find the room easily enough."

Very reluctantly Traske gave the desired information. He protested loudly against the indignation of fetters on his feet and being tied up so carefully that it was barely possible to smoke a cigarette in comfort. The two adventurers left him there, and made their way back to the cloisters.

"We shall be sure to see Madge presently," Hilsdon said. "She can't help being curious as to what is going on. And it's any money that she tells Connie."

Hilsdon's prophecy was fulfilled to the letter, for a few minutes later two slim, graceful figures flitted like butterflies along the cloisters.

"Well, you girls," Hilsdon accosted them cheerfully, "and what mischief might you be up to?"

"We're not punting on the Thames," Connie Sutton said severely, "and we're not poachers, either."

"Now, that's very unkind," Hilsdon said plaintively. "This is all the thanks we get when we tear ourselves away from the society of these cruel girls in the hour of our country's need. We are not poachers—we are officers in disguise. If we are arrested, we shall be shot as spies. To make the matter plain, we are after some dispatches

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which Traske is conveying to the officer in command at Farnborough. We are supposed to be gipsies, and if you've got five minutes to spare, we will show you the jolliest little caravan——"

"Keep to the point," Sutton said sternly.

"The fact is, we've got Traske a prisoner, and he has confessed to possessing the dispatches, which are in his cigarette case in his bedroom. If one of you girls will only nip along and get it——"

"I'd love to see that caravan," Connie said rapturously.

"Darling, you shall," Hilsdon said with equal fervour. "If Madge will cut in and get that cigarette case, you shall come down there now. We can easily put Traske to bed for an hour or two in the bracken. But we must have those papers first. Now, Madge, do be a sportsman for once."

Madge laughed, a spirit of mischief dancing in her eyes. She turned and disappeared like a shadow down the cloisters, only to return five minutes later with something dainty in the way of a cigarette case in her hand.

"There!" she said breathlessly. "But I thought you two people were alone in this business?"

"So we are," Sutton explained. "Why?"

"Oh, only because there are two other men in the house dressed very much as you are. They had the audacity to make their way into the corridor upstairs. I caught a glimpse of one of them turning into one of the rooms. It seems to me, Tom, that your intelligence department has taken the precaution of having two strings to its bow. I suppose anything is justifiable in war-time, but I thought it rather cool on the part of those men to enter the house and go upstairs. I suppose they are aware of the fact that every servant in the house is fully occupied with what is going on on the ground floor."

Hilsdon looked at Sutton and whistled softly.

"You may bet they were," he said drily. "Now, you girls, get back in the house, or you will be missed."

"What about the caravan?" Madge protested.

"Come back here in half an hour," Hilsdon went on. "Now, go back, or you will spoil everything. Ah, that's better! This is going to be a great night, old man. You tumble, don't you?"

"I tumble," Sutton said briefly. "But what's the next move? It will never do for us to disclose our identity, especially considering the fact that the house is fairly bulging with Johnnies attached to the battalions of the foe. And if, on the other hand, we do nothing——"

"Oh, come along!" Hilsdon said impatiently. "I know exactly how those chaps got in, and, therefore, it stands to reason that I know how they will come out. They must have been pretty sure of their ground for both of them to enter the house. We will go round to the side entrance. Ah, this is just as I thought!"

Hilsdon stooped and called Sutton's attention to a strand of wire running between two pegs on the grass. The entanglements were carefully skirted, and the spies came presently to a side entrance over which was a balcony facing a large casement window. By the side of the porch a short ladder was standing.

"Up you go," Hilsdon whispered. "We'll wait for our friends here. I don't suppose they will be very much longer. You stand on one side of the window, and I'll stand on the other; and when the first artist comes out on your side, drop him without the slightest hesitation. They won't have much plate on them, because most of that will be in use downstairs. But I've no doubt these chaps have laid their hands upon a tidy amount of jewellery, seeing what a crowd of women there are staying in the house."

They were quite ready, not to say eager, for the fray, but the waiting was weary work, and they were both getting a little jumpy when a long shadow crossed the window. There was a pause for a moment, and then a burly figure emerged as silent and noiseless as a shadow. His pockets appeared to be bulging, a small sack was slung over his shoulder. He gave a grunt of relief as he turned his face to the open. A second later a smashing blow on the jaw laid him out puffing and blowing on the balcony. The second man, hearing the fall, doubled on his tracks and raced along the corridor. But physical culture is not an art in high favour with the predatory class, and a neat trip brought him headlong to the ground. He found himself dragged along backwards until the balcony was reached, and the window closed carefully behind him.

"How are you getting on, Jim?" Hilsdon panted.

"Oh, I'm sitting on his head," Sutton responded cheerfully. "Most obstinate beggar he is. I had to jolt him considerably before he consented to part with his revolver.

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It's any odds your bird's got one, too. You'd better argue the matter with him."

Hilsdon promptly turned his man over and rubbed his face on the cold, unsympathetic lead casing of the balcony.

"Hand it over," he said between his teeth. "If you don't, I'll spoil those pretty features for you."

"Hilsdon promptly turned his man over."

The burglar wriggled an unsteady hand behind him and contrived to extract an ugly-looking Colt from his hip-pocket.

"So far, so good," Hilsdon said. "You go down the ladder first, Jim, and these chaps will follow you. I'll bring up the rear, and we'll take them as far as the caravan. We can search them quietly there. Now, drop that cursing, my man. If you only knew it, you are two of the luckiest rascals in England."

"I'm afraid they are," Sutton muttered mournfully. "We are bound to let the brutes go when we've done with them. We can't appear in the matter without disclosing our identity. Now, then, squad, by the left, march!"

The caravan was somewhat crowded a little later. Traske viewed the new-comers through his eyeglass with a kind of mild, resigned astonishment. His own abject misery and utter melancholy won a smile even from the burglars.

"D'yer mean to say, guv'nor," one of

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them asked, "as wot' e's another of us? D'yer know 'im, George?"

George shook his head gloomily. He was engaged in the horribly uncongenial task of emptying his pockets. With a heartfelt sigh, George's companion in misfortune was doing the same. It was a fine, glittering heap of stuff that presently littered the caravan floor. Sir Geoffrey's male guests had not been selfishly forgotten, for the heap contained watches and pins and sovereign purses, to say nothing of a little heap of cigarette cases. As one of these, a platinum and gold affair set in diamonds, was produced, a queer sort of a cry broke from Traske's lips. It was only for a moment, then he became wooden again, but, all the same, his passing agitation had not escaped Sutton's notice. He laughed drily.

"So that's the lot," Hilsdon said. "And now you two artists can go as soon as you like."

A fine perspiration bespangled George's brow.

"You're joking, guv'nor," he said hoarsely.

"Oh, no, I'm not," Hilsdon went on. "Make the most of your luck when you get the opportunity. There's the door, unless you prefer the more congenial exit of the window."

The space recently occupied by George and his companion resolved itself into thin air. Sutton bent over the glittering heap of gems, and picked up the resplendent cigarette case.

"Those chaps have done us a fine service," he said.

"In what way?" Hilsdon asked.

"Why, don't you see, Mad—I mean your messenger—brought you the wrong cigarette case. Dear old Algy here is just the sort of Johnny to carry two. And didn't you notice how he cried out when George produced that Solomon-in-all-his-glory box? George and Co. are evidently much better finders of valuables than we are. Now, come, Algy, aren't I right? If you don't agree, we can easily cut the cigarette box open."

"Don't do that!" Traske groaned. "I hate to see beautiful things spoilt. I'd much rather show you how to open the case."

"Good boy!" Hilsdon said approvingly. "What an ingenious arrangement! And now, Algy, we are going to look after your health a bit. It is absolutely necessary that you should have a little fresh air before going to sleep, so we are going to deposit you outside for half an hour on a comfortable bed of bracken. At the end of three days we shan't want you any more, and then we can return you to headquarters as an empty."

Traske made no protest—he recognised the futility of it. A little while later, and there were two other figures in the caravan. They were slender, beautiful ethereal figures in frothy lace and diaphanous draperies—they had pink in their cheeks and a tender gleam in their blue eyes.

"And that's the story," Hilsdon concluded lamely.

"Oh, it was wonderful, wonderful!" Connie exclaimed. "You are the two cleverest boys in the world!"

"I'm glad you didn't leave me out," Sutton said.

"Just as if anybody could!" Madge cried indignantly. "Oh, I should like to have seen Captain Traske's face when you brought him here! I suppose you couldn't fetch him?"

"Oh, that would be downright cruel," Sutton said. "But then girls are cruel—no sense of justice at all. You've only got to go out of your way to help another man, and they are sure to think that you are doing their sex an injustice. Now, take——"

Madge impulsively threw her arms about his neck.

"Will you ever forgive me?" she murmured.

"Connie," Hilsdon whispered, "don't you think we're in the way here? Shall I see you back to the house?"

"I think you had better, dear," Connie said demurely.

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WOMAN'S WORK IN SOCIAL SETTLEMENTS.

BY ALICE STRONACH.

WHAT is a social settlement? According to Mr. Punch, it is a place where

> Culture, in the spirit of true neighbour,
> Lives with labour.

A more serious authority, Canon Barnett, tells us that "a settlement's distinguishing feature is the absence of programme, and the presence of men and women who recognise the obligations of citizenship." From one of the newest of American settlements comes the definition of such colonies as "a group of men and women who choose to live in the less favoured districts of our cities, that they and their neighbours may share what is best in their lives." But whatever the definition, one feature that seems essential to the settlement idea is that the settlers should be founders of a home in the midst of those whom they desire to befriend—a home in the back blocks of our great cities. To bridge over the gulf that separates class from class, to emphasise in a practical way the oneness of mankind, and to do this, not by patronising from a distance, but by living among their less fortunate fellow-men, were possibly the ideas that inspired the first emigrants from the wealthier to the poorer districts of our great cities. To found, not a mission-house, nor a polytechnic, nor a house of correction, but simply a *home* that might come to be a centre of neighbourly sympathy and helpfulness—to give, not money nor doles, but leisure, knowledge, personal service, a share of the higher happiness gained through greater opportunities—these, or something like these,

Photo by] [*C. A. Pratt.*

THE WOMEN'S UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT, NELSON SQUARE, BLACKFRIARS.

were the ideals of the pioneers in the settlement movement. Ruskin's doctrine of the debt owed by English learning to English labour has borne abundant fruit since it first inspired some of the young men of Oxford with a passionate fervour for work in the East End, and sent Arnold Toynbee to burn out his short life in the work of which Toynbee Hall is a memorial.

Although the settlement movement originated with men, it is to women that it owes much of its later development, and to-day no men's settlement is considered complete without its women's house or body of women associates, while to number the settlements founded and "run" entirely by women in London, in our provincial cities,

and in America, would be no easy task. Nor is it to be wondered at that a movement based on the ideas of home and personal service should have appealed specially to women, who are still, in spite of their boasted emancipation, the home-makers of a nation, the devotees, too often the martyrs, of a doctrine of personal service. Again, settlement work concerns itself much with the care of children and of the sick and infirm, so much so that in America there are many settlements that have grown out of free kindergartens and nursing societies. Such work naturally enlists women, who in all ages have done the greater share of the world's teaching and sick-nursing.

In London, as in America, we have to-day women's settlements of many kinds, of all shades of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. At the one extreme there is the sectarian settlement, often little else than a sisterhood under a new name, or a modernised mission-house; at the other extreme we have settlements that are merely little groups of workers with no definite programme, no religious belief other than a sense of the duties of citizenship, a faith in the essential unity of mankind, a desire to understand, even if they cannot always help, the difficulties of our London poor. Traced to its origin, almost every one of these settlements will be found to have grown out of the enthusiasm of some one man or woman—an enthusiasm which, communicating itself to others, has attracted them as helpers. Such was the case with the pioneer of women's social settlements in London—the Women's University Settlement in Nelson Square, Southwark. Some twenty-five years ago, Miss Alice Grüner, a student of Newnham College, herself engaged in social work in London, inspired a number of women students with some of her own zeal. With the sympathetic co-operation of the late Miss Clough and the principals of other women's colleges, this enthusiasm soon took the permanent form of a Women's University Settlement, with Miss Grüner as head worker. Possibly the fact that Miss Octavia Hill was already working in Southwark influenced the women settlers in their choice of locality, their idea being rather to help already existing organisations than to start fresh work. Miss Hill's method of rent-collecting seemed to offer an easy and natural way of making acquaintance with the people whom they wished to befriend.

A house in Nelson Square—that quiet backwater undisturbed by the stream of busy life for ever flowing over Blackfriars Bridge—was chosen as settlement headquarters. Soon the rooms took on some of the character of their academic tenants, so that any old student of Newnham or Girton, Somerville or Lady Margaret, going to one of the weekly "at homes," at once has a pleasant sense of familiar environment. Two adjoining houses have since been added to the original settlement house; and there are now rooms for the warden and sixteen residents, besides common rooms, which are also used by the non-resident workers—about fifty in number.

Before long it became customary for women students of Oxford and Cambridge, of London University and Holloway College, to go into residence at Southwark for part of the "Long," there to be initiated into the meaning of such mystic symbols as "the C.C.H.F." (Children's Country Holiday Fund), "the C.O.S." (Charity Organisation Society), and other abbreviations. "The C.O.S." is a term apt to recur very frequently at Southwark teas, for there, even more than at other settlements, the work of the Charity Organisation Society fills a large place on the worker's programme. One of the first wardens, Miss Sewell, herself an experienced "C.O.S." secretary, has the highest opinion of the value of such work as training for students of social problems, and gave it a place of honour in a settlement which soon became a recognised training school for social workers. This educational side of the work is helped by means of a scholarship from the Emily Pfeiffer bequest, enabling a student of social problems to spend one or two years free of expense in the settlement headquarters in Nelson Square.

Special classes for invalid and crippled children, visiting for the Children's Country Holiday Fund, assisting in the work of the Children's Happy Evenings Association, organising and conducting guilds of play, clubs, and evening classes for boys and girls, the encouragement of thrift by means of benefit societies and savings banks—such are some of the fields of work in which the University women settlers are most active. Then, too, their settlement, like those in other parts of London, is looked on as a valuable source of supply for school care and other committees; and some of our most efficient school managers and poor law guardians are recruited from such colonies of women workers.

Work among invalid children occupies many of the University women who find their way to Nelson Square.

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Some years ago, inspired, no doubt, by the success of volunteer efforts on the part of the Women's University Settlement, and later by Mrs. Humphry Ward's work at the Passmore Edwards Setttlement, the education authorities of London made special provision in their schools for cripples and other physically handicapped children. But until these schools came into being, the only regular teaching the little cripples and invalids of the Southwark district had was given them by their good friends, the "settlement ladies." Some of the children were taught in the settlement house, others in their own homes. One enterprising settler, specially interested in the cripple boys, started a workshop at the Nelson Square house, where some of the boys could be taught to make and repair surgical and ordinary boots and shoes. From this small beginning has sprung an independent workshop in the Camberwell Road, known as St. Crispin's, where a bevy of lively young cobblers vary their task of making surgical boots for patients of St. Thomas's Hospital with games of billiards, cricket, or football, surprising to visitors accustomed to regard lameness as a handicap for active amusements. Though now under the auspices of Cambridge House, so far as business is concerned, St. Crispin's still enjoys the friendly and financial help of the Women's University Settlement.

Another successful effort to direct juvenile labour into the right channels is the registry and apprenticeship committee. Such committees are a feature in the programme of most settlements, and it can hardly be doubted that the valuable work done by them in inducing parents to give their children a good start in life, by apprenticing them to skilled trades, has helped to awaken the Board of Trade and the public to the important problems concerned with juvenile labour. Many of the officials of the juvenile labour exchanges are women who have gained experience as members of registry and apprenticeship committees at the various settlements.

Photo by] [*E. Halpin.*

GIRLS OF THE CHILDREN'S GUILD OF ST. MARGARET'S HOUSE, BETHNAL GREEN.

Directly connected with such effort is the Acland School Club, which offers a fascinating field for the energy and enthusiasm of the young University woman who finds her way to the Nelson Square Settlement. The club, worked in connection with the London County Council Evening Continuation School in Orange Street, provides just the magnet that is needed to draw boys and girls from the counter attractions of the street and the

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cheap music-hall. The preliminary half-hour of bagatelle and other games, of dancing and friendly meeting in the warm, well-lighted school hall, gives a zest to the classes that follow, and the social evening once a week, the summer holidays and excursions, the prestige of belonging to a club—above all, the personality of the woman of culture—all have their influence in the taming of the rougher spirits who find their way to this evening school in one of the poorer districts of Southwark.

Other residents find congenial occupation in visiting for the Settlement's Health Society, which works in friendly relations with St. Thomas's and other hospitals, and with the medical officer of health for the district. Poor mothers and lonely invalids soon learn to welcome health missionaries who can back their advice and sympathy with timely help from the Southwark Invalid Kitchen, a holiday in the country, or an invitation to a Thursday afternoon baby party, and an occasional outing to some such earthly Paradise as the beautiful gardens of Royal Holloway College, Egham.

Photo by [*E. Halpin.*

GUILD BOYS, ST. MARGARET'S, BETHNAL GREEN.

For some time the Women's University Settlement had its own dispensary, established by one of the settlers at her own expense. It soon proved its usefulness so convincingly that it was taken over by the Metropolitan Provident Dispensary Association as one of its branches. Another link with the work of healing in the district is the Eleanor Benson Fund, founded in memory of a daughter of Archbishop Benson, who was one of the Nelson Square pioneers. The fund, controlled by the Settlement, helps to maintain the Southwark and Newington District Nurses' Home.

Ever since its foundation, the Women's University Settlement has been singularly fortunate in its wardens, who have all shown the rare and happy union of personality and tact, sympathy and judgment, the enthusiasm that inspires, and the experience sometimes needed to restrain the youthful zealot. Miss Alice Grüner, Miss Argles, Miss Margaret Sewell, Miss Helen Gladstone—the last a former Vice-Principal of Newnham College, who, to quote the Bishop of Hereford in speaking of her appointment as warden, "bears a great name, and bears it worthily"—each of these, before coming to Southwark, had been an influence in the lives of younger University women. The traditions they established are ably maintained by the present warden, Miss M. McN. Sharpley, and the sub-warden, Miss Latham. Under their rule, the pioneer women's settlement continues to be a centre of helpfulness and kindly wisdom, with an open door for the fresh ideas, the new needs, the ever-increasing opportunities of twentieth-century progress.

Other groups of University women have settled on the Surrey side of the river. Though constitutionally linked with the Women's University Settlement, and represented on its committee, the students of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, have their own settlement in Kennington Road, Lambeth.

That the woman student is a mistress of resource in matters practical is proved by the ingenuity which these Oxford ladies have shown in adapting a quartette of suburban residences to settlement requirements. The stable and coach-house have become a club-room, the hay-loft a bath-room, and the coachman's house has been transformed into a small chapel, where a bishop occasionally addresses the settlers, or Lambeth mothers gather to enjoy a restful hour and an organ recital. The joint gardens of the four houses form a delightful

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recreation ground for the juvenile members of the many settlement clubs.

Parochial work and district visiting for the local clergy have an important place in the programme of this settlement and others in Southwark's diocese, most of which owe their existence to Bishop Talbot, now Bishop of Winchester. But the Oxford students and others who are working under the direction of the warden, Miss Pearson, and the sub-warden, Miss Olive Butler, have also a wide and varied field of employment as members of local committees, school managers, rent-collectors, and health visitors.

The neighbouring Lambeth Workhouse offers an opportunity for visiting the old and infirm under the beneficent Brabazon Employment Scheme inaugurated by the Countess of Meath. Morley College and the North Lambeth Apprenticeship Committee give congenial occupation to those interested in the welfare of the youths of Lambeth; and the Personal Service Association, which Mrs. Asquith has helped to found, has recruits among the settlers, Miss Asquith sometimes coming to Lambeth to lend a hand in this branch of work.

In addition to all this, there is a wide and fascinating field of activity open to settlers in "Salamanca," as the parish of St. Mary-the-Less is named in settlement parlance. The term covers a network of clubs for girls and boys, and all manner of activities, from Old English morris dances to new Canterbury pilgrimages to St. Thomas à Becket's shrine, with now and then the highly-prized privilege of a visit to Oxford under the escort of those who have exchanged its academic calm for the very different atmosphere of Lambeth's noisy streets.

The close association of the Bishop of Winchester and the Hon. Mrs. Talbot with settlement work in the Bishop's former diocese of Southwark is commemorated in the name of Talbot House, Addington Square, one of the Camberwell settlements. From her new home, Farnham Castle, Mrs. Talbot still continues to take a warm interest in the work for women and children in which the settlers are engaged under Miss Douglas, who trained at the Women's University Settlement. Besides the usual work in schools and on local committees, this settlement runs a successful play centre, with plant and staff supplied by Mrs. Humphry Ward. One of many practical modes of helping the poor mothers in the district is a class where they learn, with expert aid, to make old clothes look almost as well as new, by skilful mending and cutting down, so that draggled skirts and slop clothing are becoming rarer in the streets round Addington Square. Some of the settlers give valuable help in connection with the Baden-Powell Girl Guides' Corps of the parish, the girls of the 1st Walworth owing to the settlement ladies their skill in bed-making, in tying knots that do not immediately come undone, and in the manufacture of Union Jacks.

Photo by [*E. Halpin.*

THE SENIOR DRILL SQUAD OF THE GIRLS' GUILD, ST. MARGARET'S HOUSE, BETHNAL GREEN.

Where the Cambridge and Oxford settlers had led the way, women of other colleges and various denominations speedily followed,

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and soon colonies of social workers sprang up all over London, north and south, and east and west.

The Cheltenham College students and the women workers of Oxford House, at one in their desire to do for the women and girls of Bethnal Green what Oxford House was doing for the men and boys, decided to join forces; and together they rented Mayfield House, not far from the Bethnal Green Museum. Miss Beale, Principal of Cheltenham College, became president of the settlement thus formed, and Miss Corbett its warden. After three years of this joint work, the Oxford House ladies transferred themselves to a house in Bethnal Green Square, and thus St. Margaret's Settlement came into being, the Cheltenham ladies remaining at Mayfield House. St. Margaret's soon needed more accommodation, and University House, in the same square, was taken. Under the auspices of Miss Harrington, these two houses soon became a centre of brightness and culture for the young folk of Bethnal Green.

Factory girls find their way to the club-room, to dance and drill, to practise cookery and learn to make their own blouses. In summer there is vigorous practising on the settlement bicycles, and all the year round the girls and boys and babies of Bethnal Green, belonging to the St. Margaret's clubs and guilds, grow gentler in manner and stronger in character under the influence of women who leave their luxurious homes to learn something of the lives of the London poor. Some of these ladies find their way to branch settlements of St. Margaret's—to St. Mildred's, in the Isle of Dogs, and St. Helen's, the Grove, Stratford, there to lend a hand in polishing the manners of "The Snaps"—since manners are an extra down Millwall way—and initiating "pearls" of factory girlhood into the joys of wand drill and maypole dancing, as a change from their daily drudgery in jam or rope factory.

London dockland has other women's settlements. In East India Dock Road the Presbyterians have made a modest beginning with some workers who befriend the factory girls in the neighbourhood. Out Canning Town way, where a vista of many masts widens the imagination of dwellers near the docks, the women of the Congregational body are working side by side with the men settlers at Mansfield House. A day spent there with Miss Cheetham, the head worker, is an experience not soon to be forgotten. Beginning at the office, far down the Barking Road, and ending at the pretty little hospital in Plaistow, the pilgrimage is a series of pleasant surprises.

One of the most delightful of such surprises is a garden—a miniature park, indeed, with its trees, flower-beds, paths, and seats. Hidden behind the shops and houses, this oasis has some of the unexpectedness and charm of a vision from "The Arabian Nights." There, in spring and summer, the settlement has its garden-parties and open-air concerts. Cripple children are wheeled in their spinal carriages to bask in the sun on its lawns; old folk look in to praise the settlement flowers and the settlement vegetables, and, after a cup of tea, to declare that an hour there is as good as a fortnight in the country. Garden-parties for "tiny tots" and "little white ribboners" are held there, and the lady gardeners are well rewarded for their efforts to make the settlement garden a glimpse of heaven to these babies of dockland.

Growth has marked the passing of the twenty-one years of the settlement's activity. The new residence is already all too small for the hive of busy workers, and some have swarmed into the unoccupied Presbyterian manse next door. The old settlement house in the Barking Road, with its view of the distant forest of masts and gleaming river, is now used as a club-house, providing a delightful girls' parlour for the club and for the meetings of the married girls' guild. Lees Hall, too, where social evenings are held, is soon to be replaced by a larger permanent building.

At Canning Town, as at all women's settlements, the child is the focus for beneficent energy—from the babies who bloom or fade like flowers in the crowded homes of mean streets, the little maimed folk of slightly older years, with a heritage of suffering, and the other pale-faced children of the city, who, but for their settlement friends, might miss all the joys that should be childhood's birthright.

For these the women settlers of Canning Town are veritable fairy godmothers. Their warden, as a co-opted member of the local education committee, a governor of the Central Secondary School, and manager of one of the two Higher Elementary Schools, wields beneficent influence on the lives of the sixty thousand children of the borough of West Ham. Some of the settlers are school managers, and the settlement has its own evening classes for women and girls, registered as an evening continuation school,

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where members of the Women's Co-operative Guild and Old Age pensioners vie with the girl fresh from school in appreciation of Shakespeare and such modern literature as the best works of our greatest Victorian novelists and their latter-day successors.

In summer, hundreds of children to whom the holidays mean only the exchange of school benches for crowded homes, are gathered into a holiday school, staffed by volunteer teachers from the training colleges at Aberystwyth, Holloway, Somerville, and Avery Hill. The boys taste the delights of swimming and cricket, of cobbling their own boots, patching their own garments, and doing odd jobs of carpentry and other things beloved of the human boy, while the girls are taught to make blouses, dress dolls, make and equip a doll's-house, paint flowers, sing songs and dance morris dances, an outing to Epping Forest or Greenwich Park crowning the summer's glories.

A club for crippled lads and work for invalid children are backed up by special facilities for sending these to the country and the sea—often to the settlement's own convalescent home at Danbury—and infant consultations, baby weighing, and baby visiting are part of the programme of the Canning Town dispensary and of the health visitors. A women's employment bureau gives fresh hope to widows, deserted wives, and women with sick or unemployed husbands, while the settlement branch of the "Mabys" is linked with the work of the girls' club, whose members gather in the club-house to drill and sing, do fancy work, make their dresses, learn to cook, and sometimes to brush up their painfully-acquired and speedily-forgotten accomplishments of reading and writing.

Health visiting under a trained nurse is a favourite occupation of the Canning Town woman settler, but the most popular occupation of all is nursing in the dainty wards of the pretty little hospital in Balaam Street, Plaistow, or work in the out-patient department, or in the Quadrant Street dispensary, under Sister Katherine and two lady doctors of the district.

Photo by] [*M. C. Rowland.*

THE BERMONDSEY SETTLEMENT FREE KINDERGARTEN: CHILDREN AT THE SAND-TRAY.

At Bermondsey, where, in the midst of squalor, the Wesleyans, under Dr. Scott Lidgett, have raised themselves a palatial settlement, women work in such close association with the men that it is difficult to draw a hard-and-fast line between their different provinces. But there, as in the new Passmore Edwards Settlement, no provision has been made for women residents in the main building.

But the women workers have their own residence in connection with the settlement of which they form a part. The women's home consists of two adjacent houses in the

Lower Road, Rotherhithe, with Southwark Park in front and the Surrey Commercial Docks behind them. There they lead the simple life, with Miss Mary Simmons, one of the first women workers of the settlement, as Head. The house frequently overflows, but Miss Simmons, who combines a gift of humour with amazing energy, declares this to be an advantage.

"In the early days," she confesses, "I used to wish that we could build a 'proper' women's house, to house the women residents more in college fashion, as the men are housed at the settlement buildings in Farncombe Street. But I no longer desire this, although it would make our life easier in many ways. For what Mr. Lidgett said fifteen years ago is entirely true—a settlement is an artificial expedient. Now," she adds, "the women's house is very like a beehive: when it gets too full, it *swarms*. The new 'swarm' settles down in some fresh spot in the district, and lo! there is a fresh centre of life and work, and a far better chance for originality and personality to have the freedom and scope they need if the life and work are to be natural, and to grow along true and lasting lines."

There is such a centre in Union Road, where a worker has a little house with two friends, and another in Gomm Road. Another is St. George's House, where three live right in the midst of a nest of the poorest streets and courts; and Beatrice House is certainly one, though no resident actually sleeps there, from lack of accommodation.

In the early days of the Bermondsey Settlement's history, some of the Rev. J. Scott Lidgett's helpers "lived with labour" in model dwellings near the settlement headquarters.

It was from one of these dwellings that "Sister Grace," as the Bermondsey "bibies" call their own particular friend, started her now well-known work, the Children's Guild of Play—an *édition de luxe* of the Board School Happy Evenings—and the Guild of the Brave Poor Things, a work suggested by Mrs. Ewing's "Story of a Short Life." The one enterprise has brought brightness and poetry into the lives of the children of one of the dreariest districts of South London, while the other has created an *esprit de corps* among the halt, maimed, and blind, inspiring them with some of the courageous fortitude of Mrs. Ewing's little hero.

Photo by [*Joan*

MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN AT THE BABIES' INSTITUTE, ROTHERHITHE.

Now the brave poor things have their own beautiful heritage house at Chiddingly-bury, in the heart of the Sussex Downs, and in the sunny workshops lately opened by Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, little cripples are taught to manufacture artistic toys and nursery furniture for children more richly, if not always more happily, dressed than those waifs and strays of London's teeming streets.

Infinite in their variety are the schemes for brightening child-life which have their focus in the unpretentious Women's House in the Lower Road, Rotherhithe, and its offshoots. A babies' institute and a school for mothers, with homely talks and advice from a Queen's Jubilee nurse, a day nursery and free kindergarten, and a babies' guild, are some of the means for dealing with the many perils that beset infant life in Bermondsey's crowded streets.

Nor are the children of older growth forgotten. To Beatrice House come boys

and girls, drawn by the joyous play hours. In the mornings small handmaidens come to beg the "Mabys" ladies to find them "a really nice place," and in the afternoon, when the women's social and babies' institute meet there, and again in the evening, when factory girls come, certain of friendly welcome, the upper rooms of Beatrice House are in their glory.

At St. George's House — old residents remember it as "The George," a well-known "pub"—there are clubs for boys as well as girls, one of the women settlers showing a genius for the management of half-tamed Bermondsey lads. The poorest and roughest are welcomed and admitted without formal preliminary to the privileges of warmth and light, the joys of bagatelle, dominoes, draughts, and a library, with a bar handy where a modest copper will procure a cup of hot tea or coffee or other temperance drink. Standing in one of the very poor streets leading down to the river, with poorer courts and alleys all round it, St. George's is a splendid centre for real neighbourly work for the two or three philanthropic women who make their home there. Here, too, there is a men's club, which is self-managed by a committee, and includes the poorest dock labourers.

Photo by] [*Jean Macfee.*

SOME OF THE CHILDREN AT ST. GEORGE'S HOUSE, ROTHERHITHE

A link between the girl-life of the West End and of Bermondsey exists in the "Time and Talents" Settlement in Bermondsey Street. In its pleasant class-rooms, friendships are formed between those for whom girlhood means joyous freedom from care, and those others to whom it is often but one phase in a lifetime of hardship and toil. Cheap dinners for factory girls are a great institution at this settlement, and stubborn prejudices against the "idle rich" are apt to melt when the same "idle rich," in big aprons, cheerily cope with the demands of some hundred hungry factory girls for savoury stew, "toad-in-the-hole," jam roll, tea, and other delicacies. A short service follows the dinner, and once a week ladies from the settlement visit the factories, holding dinner-hour services and bringing welcome gifts of flowers. Simple lectures on hygiene and temperance, classes for needlework and cookery, singing and drill, a library and penny bank, Saturday afternoon outings, a Sunday class followed by tea and evening service at the parish church, for all who care to stay, and clubs for children, are some of the activities of girls to whose "time and talents" the Rector of Bermondsey commended the five thousand factory girls of his parish some twelve years ago.

Youth, with its high hopes and unclouded ideals, is a corner-stone in another of the many settlements of South London which owe their beginning to the ex-Bishop of Southwark and Mrs. Talbot—the Settlement of the United Girls' Schools' Mission in Camberwell. Present and past pupils of girls' high schools all over the country provide funds and workers for the girls' clubs and children's play hours, and many an "old girl" finds her way to Camberwell to give a hand to local committees for the care of school children, the aid of invalid children, the country holiday fund, Charity Organisation, guilds and play, work among mentally defective children, and the teaching of invalids in Camberwell Infirmary. The girls of Princess Helena College have provided a hall for St. Mark's

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Mission, and a house for workers in the parish of St. Mark's was the gift of Miss Dove, late head-mistress of Wycombe Abbey. In the Settlement House at 19, Peckham Road, there is room for fifteen residents and many outworkers. By a year's practical work and attendance at the School of Sociology in Vauxhall Bridge Road, a resident at the settlement may obtain a diploma qualifying for one of the many paid posts now open to those who devote themselves to public service.

At Browning House, Walworth, we find men and women settlers taking an equal share in providing for their poorer neighbours such pleasures as summer camps in Surrey, drawing-room receptions, and in the other work presided over by Mr. Herbert Stead, the warden, and his wife.

Of settlements that are really modernised sisterhoods, the best known is the College of Grey Ladies, which works in and around the southernmost boundary of London. A picturesque eighteenth-century mansion on Blackheath Hill, surrounded by a shady garden, houses the "Grey Ladies," with whom the "Brown Ladies" of St. Paul's, Lorrimore Square, have lately joined forces. The busy life appears to have a charm for many women, and a second house in Kennington Park Road has lately been acquired for the housing of these devoted Church workers, whose activities are directed by the Bishop of Southwark and the clergy of his diocese. Another group of Church women have formed a settlement in North London, with headquarters in Highbury Park. Like the "Grey Ladies," the ladies of the North London settlement work under their bishop, proving invaluable lieutenants to the rectors and vicars of North London, and doing much to awaken the factory girls of Islington to higher ideals of life.

"As dull as Hoxton" is a phrase which has passed into a proverb, but with symptoms of the present-day epidemic of social settlements visible in many quarters of the once dreary district, there is hope even for Sir Walter Besant's land of the "Children of Gibeon." Some fourteen years ago an appeal from the Bishop of Stepney, now Bishop of London, encouraged Miss Honor Morten, who was already at work in the Board Schools of Hoxton, to carry out a long-cherished scheme of starting a centre for social work in the neighbourhood of Nile Street. Thus a settlement on somewhat original lines came into being. Resolved to live as the poor live, doing their own "chores," even their own scrubbing, the settlers rented as headquarters a few modest rooms in one of the blocks of "models" that line the street known locally as "the Nile." Work with and for the children of the neighbourhood as playmates and as school managers, all the secretarial business and organising and much of the visiting for the Shoreditch branch of the Children's Country Holiday Fund, and some social work of a friendly and informal kind among the factory girls, were undertaken by these settlers.

Now the unique little settlement is only a memory to some of the dwellers in the Nile and teachers in the Hoxton schools. But the children's happy evenings which the settlers helped to start still flourish, and lasting memorials to the work of their warden on the London School Board are the visiting school nurses and the baths for mentally defective children in some of the London County Council's special schools. It was at the Hoxton Settlement that the pioneer school nurse, supported by funds collected by Miss Morten and her friends, began the work which resulted in the school nurse becoming a permanent institution in the poorer elementary schools.

Far from the Nile, in one of the beauty spots of Sussex, Miss Morten has established the Tolstoi Settlement, where she gathers around her some of the physically handicapped little ones of the London slums—the blind, the deaf, and the dumb—whose needs have always made special appeal to her.

Though first in the field, Miss Morten's settlement did not long remain the only colony of the kind in a once neglected district. In Shepherdess Walk, close to Nile Street, the women's branch of the new Christian Social Union Settlement, was established, with the late Miss Eves, a former student of Newnham, at its head.

A year ago Miss Eves died, but the work she began, the zeal she inspired by her energy and dauntless courage, have spread beneficent roots through a desert of mean streets. The Douglas Day Nursery, helped by Muriel Lady Helmsley and her committee, serves also as a training school for children's nurses. A kindergarten with a roof-garden that is the joy of Hoxton three-year-olds, a restaurant kitchen, a second-hand clothes shop, girls' clubs, with a holiday home at Worthing as annexe, a skilled employment committee, and some teaching of the blind on the Braille system in their own homes, are but a few of the activities carried on from

Photo by] [*Gertrude James.*

THE ORATORY, ST. MILDRED'S HOUSE, MILLWALL.

the Women's House connected with the Maurice Hostel.

Here, as at other settlements, an extraordinary amount of public social work is achieved by the women settlers, who serve on local boards and committees. Specially valuable is the help given by these ladies on the School Children's Care Committees, the Skilled Employment and After-Care Committees, and the Juvenile Advisory Board. Their intimate and personal knowledge of the actual conditions of life in the neighbourhood is much greater and more accurate than that of any casual visitor could possibly be. That the London County Council recognises this fact is evident, for of late years the Council's staff of officials for the care of the children in its schools has been largely recruited from the Women's House of the Maurice Hostel and similar settlements.

St. Hilda's, the Cheltenham College Women's Settlement, having left its work further east to the care of the ladies of St. Margaret's, has found fresh pastures in the once gruesome haunts of "The Child of the Jago." St. Hilda's occupies a house specially built for it by shareholders —a handsome red-brick building in Old Nicholl Street, with conveniently-arranged rooms for its warden, Miss Bruce, and for thirteen other residents. These busy themselves with work for the elementary schools and for the Country Holiday Fund, health visiting, and girls' clubs. At St Hilda's, as at Southwark, Charity Organisation work is in high favour as training for residents and for visitors from far lands who come to learn methods of practical philanthropy.

Though inspired by the imagination of a woman, the Passmore Edwards Settlement, in Tavistock Place, reserves for men only the privileges of residence in its luxurious hostel, although, at the formal opening of the building, the warden acknowledged that the greater share of the work was then being done by women, under the presidency of Mrs. Humphry Ward, to whose "Robert Elsmere" the settlement owes its existence. A domestic economy kitchen, flourishing clubs for girls, and a share in the gymnasium, are part of the provision made by this settlement for the girls and women of the surrounding district.

In the Bloomsbury Settlement, we again find the child enthroned as the centre of womanly solicitude. The Children's Recreation School,

Photo by] [*Gertrude James.*

ST. MILDRED'S HOUSE, MILLWALL, ISLE OF DOGS.

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with its games room and library, its opportunities for amateur carpentry, cobbling, cookery, basket-making, boat-building, dancing, clay modelling, and listening to fairy stories, has opened a new life to the white-faced waifs in the squalid streets between Tavistock Square and Gray's Inn Road.

The delightful institution of play centres in the poorer schools of London owes its existence to Mrs. Humphry Ward, and a later development of this beneficent work is that of organised play in school playgrounds during the holiday season. Poor children gathered from crowded streets and still more crowded homes learn to enjoy, under the eyes of experts, games of cricket and football, rounders and skipping, and quieter pastimes at tables set in snug corners, provision being made even for the baby and the juvenile "baby-minder."

But the crowning achievement of the women of the Passmore Edwards Settlement is their success in awakening the education authorities of London to the needs of the cripple and otherwise invalided children of poor homes. Following up the experiment made by the Women's University Settlement in Southwark, Mrs. Humphry Ward inaugurated an invalid school in the settlement house in Tavistock Place, with carriages to take the children to and from their homes, nurses to care for them, and dinners to obviate the need for a second journey in school hours between school and home. Now the cripples, with their nurse in attendance, may be seen driving to and from their special classes in smoothly-tyred waggonettes bearing the letters "L.C.C.," and the invalid school at the Bloomsbury Settlement is no longer needed. Like that at Nelson Square, it has done its work, and secured for the invalid child its chance of growing up to useful and self-supporting citizenship, instead of becoming a burden to the State and to itself.

Everywhere in and around London the woman's settlement has put forth shoots. Down at Deptford the ladies interested in the Deptford Fund Scheme are bringing the influences of culture to bear on the girls and women employed in the slaughter yards, and there, too, the first school clinic was opened some little time ago. West London has its centre of helpfulness in the Bishop Creighton House, Lillie Road, Fulham, opened in 1908 by the Bishop of London as a memorial of his predecessor. The sunny, comfortable house, with room for seven residents and a head-worker, is a centre of useful work for the poor of Fulham, Hammersmith, and Kensington. Here, as at most of the settlements, women whose home ties do not permit of residence are welcomed as associates.

The ladies of the Roman Catholic community, no less active in settlement enterprise than their sisters of other religious creeds, have founded settlements in different districts of East London. St. Philip's, in Mile End Road, owes much to the generosity of the Duke of Norfolk's family. His Grace's sister, Lady Mary Howard, maintains the house in the parish of the Guardian Angels, which is a centre of friendly help for East End mothers and girls and children. Summer outings to Arundel Castle, by invitation of the Duchess of Norfolk, or to the convent at Mill Hill, where one of the Duke's sisters is a sister of charity, are red-letter days for the mothers and children of Mile End and of St. Cecilia's House, Commercial Road, where Lady Edmund Talbot and other well-known ladies of Roman Catholic family have founded a second settlement. Yet another settlement of women belonging to the Church of Rome is St. Anthony's, Tower Hill, in which the Duchess of Newcastle takes an active interest.

From London the women's settlement movement has spread to the provinces—to Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow. In Anderston, one of the crowded parts of Glasgow, the Queen Margaret College girls have founded a settlement, with Miss Marion Rutherford, a Queen Margaret student, who trained for her social work at the Women's University Settlement in London, as their warden.

In all these colonies the ideal is always the same—to elevate in mind, body, and estate the dwellers in the poorer districts, especially the women and children, and to bring order and brightness out of chaos and dreariness. Even if they were of no other use, these social settlements, especially those where the settlers really live at "the roots," doing their own "chores" and facing in daily life the difficulties of their poorer neighbours, are at least helping to bridge over the great gulf fixed between the brain-worker and the hand-worker. The settlement headquarters and the clubs and guilds that grow up around them provide common ground where the educated woman and the factory girl may meet, giving and taking those lessons of life that both can teach and both must learn.

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ALLARDYCE—ADVICE.

By HAROLD WHITE.

VEDALE TRENCH looked out of his office window on all the beauties of Shoreditch.

The compromise between fog and rain, aided by a derelict street lamp, did something to lend enchantment to the view, but not enough to prevent him from turning despairing blue eyes back to his surroundings. If they had been new, they would not have interested him, and he had been there three weeks, which, if not an eternity, had bred familiarity with a writing-table with a flawless blotting-pad upon it, a severe collection of chairs which were almost ugly enough to have the word "art" applied to them, and the outsides of certain official-looking volumes. The floor was of green cork lino, and his eyes wandered across its glacial surface till they arrived at the door-mat, and travelled thence to the frosted door, which showed the reflex of the name Allardyce and the word "Advice."

"Good Heavens!" he murmured, and turned again to the window.

Then something quite unusual happened. A taxi, like a tortured lost soul, writhed down the road and finally pulled up before the door below, delivering up a denizen of St. James's hampered with a kit-bag.

It seemed incredible to the marooned Trench, but the steps of the denizen sounded on the stairs and stopped before the frosted window. The knocker awoke any dead there might have been in Lynch Street, Shoreditch, and Trench opened the door.

"Tram!" he gasped.

"Hullo, Trinky, my boy!" exclaimed the new-comer, who bore, besides his kit-bag, the name of Tristram Ligonier and a general air of one who hunts in the shires.

"What—what do *you* want?" asked Trench.

"Advice."

"Advice?"

"Yes, advice. See!"—and Ligonier pointed indiscriminately to the legend "Allardyce—Advice." "I've seen Lady Althea," he continued, "once by accident, three times more by design—once at the Crippled Orphans, once at the Shoreditch flower-window business, and again at somethin' or other of the same kind. She doesn't know me. I think she ought to. She——"

"Oh, but she——" began Trench.

"I know. She's not interested in my kind of person. Very sound. She does somethin' or other in the world. She helps along. I admire her for it. After all I've seen, goin' round the island, I can't help thinkin' that she's in a class of her own."

"She doesn't care a row of pins for her own class," agreed Trench. "She thinks they fritter away their time."

"So they do."

"Consequence is, she would rather see what can be made out of a pawnbroker's assistant than a member of White's."

"A pawnbroker's assistant! It's funny that you should say that," said Ligonier, and put down his bag.

"She really does put more on people who don't speak the King's English than me and you, what do," said Trench, and nodded his head solemnly.

"I know she goes in for good works. Can't you understand that that's what I think so sound? I like it—I positively like it, Trinky."

"She began by doing an awful lot of good down here—drunkards reformed, and people marrying each other, and all that—and then she set up this shop."

"Yes, what for?"

"Well, I'll put it as she puts it, if I can," began Trench doubtfully. "Oh, by the way, she's Miss Allardyce here. She found the Lady Althea brought her a lot of workers from the West End who did nothing. Well, she's got a notion—and she's read a lot, you know, about wages, and what you can get for 'em, food, light, clothes, soap, water, and—er—well, all those kind of things"—and here he began obviously to quote—"that there are lots of people accounted poor who could have the same social amenities as the rich, the same pleasant intercourse, the same mental

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pursuits, practically the same daily lives. In fact—er—"—and the well of quotation dried—"it's a sort of sermon on the motto 'Clean hands are more than coronets'—they'd be just the same as us or rather better, if they only knew how. And so she set up this advice bureau for people to come and ask her how."

"Well?"

"Well, nobody's come—nobody except you."

"Ah, and what are you?" asked Ligonier.

"I'm the secretary. She said that her cousin—I'm her cousin, you know—mustn't fritter away his young life, and so you know—oh, of course you don't know, though—I had to come. She makes one do things, but she can't make 'em come to the bureau."

"Is she cut up about it?"

"Frightfully."

"Then to-day we'll break the record," exclaimed Ligonier. "To-day she shall have a pawnbroker's assistant"—and he pointed to his bag—"who wants to know how to talk, how to have table manners, how, in fact, to be one of Nature's little gentlemen."

"Well," said Trench, "if you are going to be a pawnbroker's assistant, you had better be it jolly soon, because she's about due. But she'll catch you. She knows as many dialects as an Indian civilian."

"Oh, no, she won't. I've been having lessons in impolite conversation. My professor comes up to my room every night while I dress for dinner. My clothes are real. They've been real for about fifteen years. I'm ready down to the last button. But where can I do the transformation scene?"

"In there," said Trench, opening the door of his room, "and hurry up. I believe I hear her coming."

So did Ligonier. In an instant he and his kit-bag were in the next room, and Trench was waiting uneasily until the door should open and admit the giver of advice.

If the reader had been present when Lady Althea entered, he or she would have realised that Du Maurier and Gibson might not have been merely dreaming of fair women when they limned their nobly born ladies with their high-held heads—they might have seen them, or one, at all events. If this had been their model, there might have been added even another grace of feature, there assuredly would have been a more pronounced note of decision.

Trench plumped into the middle of things as they were supposed to be.

"There's a man waiting," he said, "for advice."

"Where?" asked Lady Althea.

"In my room. He's—he's tidying himself."

"Then he is taking some of it before it was given. What is he?"

"He says he's a pawnbroker's assistant," said Trench doubtfully.

"Then show him in," said Lady Althea, seating herself at the writing-table and making ready for the fray.

Trench hesitated. Ligonier would be at the moment in the most embarrassing midway of his preparations. He was saved by the tap of finger-nails on the glass window of the door.

"Come in!" called Lady Althea, with brisk enthusiasm. This was going to be her busy day.

There was a fumbling with the handle, and a wet, undersized, murky male creature stood shuffling at the opened door. He looked at Lady Althea with a half-apologetic, half-furtive gaze from under the low forehead, with the originally fair hair smarmed down and curled upon it, and twisted a narrow-brimmed bowler of uncertain age and colour in his chapped, red hands.

"Arternoon, lidy!" he said eventually.

"You mean, 'Good morning, madam! May I come in?'" said Lady Althea. "Yes, please do, and will you kindly shut the door? Won't you sit down?"

The stranger shut the door with his elbow, wiped his feet on the mat which was not there, but did not sit down.

"I bin followin' yer——" he began.

"Then you shouldn't—at least, you shouldn't say so," interrupted Lady Althea.

"For the larst fortnit I've mawked yer, and I see yer kim up an' kim darn, an' t'-dy I took leave to step in and arst yer for a word 'spectin' this 'ere." And he put his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the word "Advice."

"Quite so. Now, tell me, how can I help you? My name is Miss Allardyce."

"Miss?" interjected the seeker after advice.

"Yes," said Lady Althea decisively. "And yours?"

"Jimes 'Erris. I kim up 'ere to arst yer, no offence, abart the wyes wot classy people 'ev."

Lady Althea gazed with some pleasure, but without amusement, at the virgin soil for her tillage. She began with a charming little lecture on the non-existent barriers of

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class. That there were essential differences, Mr. Harris must dismiss from his mind—from his evidently much puzzled mind. There were just minor little matters, such as methods of greeting, of speaking to each other, of entering upon free but considerate intercourse, which Mr. Harris would pick up at once. Mere deportment was just a matter of ease. (Mr. Harris looked as though he never would know ease again.) The real thing—and he and she would have several talks upon the subject—was to acquire an outlook upon life.

Mr. Harris's hat went round and round in his hands like a potter's wheel, and again he shuffled.

"What I perticler wanted to git the grawsp of," said he, "is 'ow a bloke—I should say cove—kin be on easy speakin' terms with a lidy, no matter wot class."

Lady Althea smiled. She scented a romance.

"Whether it's a woman or a man, doesn't in the least matter," she began, when Tristram Ligonier—a weirdly altered Tristram Ligonier to Trench's bewildered eyes—entered from the other door. He could not help being tall and weather-tanned and good-looking, but his bearing, his clothes, his tie, his boots, the brushing of his hair, and, when he spoke, his first words, caused his friend to blink and gasp.

"Beg pawd'n," he said, and lurched uneasily. "'Ope I don't intrude."

"Certainly not," said Lady Althea, "if you too have come for advice. I was having a chat with Mr. Harris. I will introduce you to each other, when I know your name."

"'Elf Leggin, at your service," said Ligonier. He managed to suggest deference to the lady rather than diffidence with himself, in contrast with Mr. Harris; but then Mr. Harris had his little romance.

"Mr. Harris, this is Mr. Alfred Leggin. Of course, these things are the merest trifles, but I may suggest, may I not—that, after all, is what I am here for—as you are not undergraduates or subalterns, instead of just nodding, you might shake hands. Ah, that is another trifle, too. I shouldn't, if I were either of you, wipe my hand first on my trouser leg. Now, I don't quite know why, but it is always usual to open conversation with some reference to some general subject, such as the weather."

"Rotten!" suggested Mr. Leggin.

"Horrible," put in the lady, with a note of correction.

"Gits in the wye o' gettin' abart," said Mr. Harris, with his eye on the lady.

She led them on from the weather to means of transit in London, the improvements in the metropolis, the comparative advantages of London and country life, football, the Territorials, and by repeating certain expressions with the proper intonation, suggesting the abolition of certain phrases, such as one beginning with "Strike me," from Mr. Harris, and the perpetual use of "*I'm* shew-er," from Mr. Leggin, she began to prepare the soil for the seeds of the knowledge of a proper outlook on life.

Now, it happened that while Mr. Leggin began to display remarkable social aptitude, considering his opportunities, making several shrewd comments on life in his racy dialect which made Lady Althea laugh heartily, and catching immediately her corrections of tone and phrase, Mr. Harris became more monosyllabic; the monosyllables became less like those used in polite circles, and a sort of sullen resentment seemed to take hold of him. Finally, murmuring that lessons in a class was no "blooming use to him," and that what he had come for was private instruction, he made an ungraceful exit.

"Per'aps it's time fer me to be on the 'op likewise," suggested Mr. Leggin.

"'Perhaps' and 'hop,' Mr. Leggin, and not 'on the hop' at all. Time to go, you mean. You do not mind being caught up constantly, do you? You are getting on so nicely, and these are just the merest trifles."

"Not 'arf—oh, no, I know—don't tell me—not in the least, I assure you. That's better, isn't it? But I thought it might be your dinner hour, or somethink o' that—oh, no, something!"

"I generally eat a sandwich here for lunch," said Lady Althea. "It is rather absurd, of course, but we generally call what we eat in the middle of the day 'lunch,' or, if we are rather old-fashioned, 'luncheon.'"

"Luncheon!" repeated Mr. Leggin under his breath, as though he had found a pearl of learning. "Y'know, I'm shewer—no, sure—that I shall come my worst 'owlers—howlers—when I start to eat in company, first-class company, y'know. That's where I shall get darned an' arted—no, downed and outed."

Of course, Mr. Leggin was not one of the hard-worked wives to whom Lady Althea wanted to give hints on household economies and the revival of social rites; but as the hard-worked wives had not come, and Mr. Leggin had, and was such an earnest pupil,

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it seemed only right to improve the shining hour. And so Uvedale Trench soon found himself, with some indignation, out in the rain, scouring the neighbourhood for a light meal for three, to provide an object-lesson in the art of eating food.

Without doing anything revolting, or even rude, Mr. Leggin at first contrived to display the most remarkable collection of table manners; but as the meal proceeded, by dint of continually watching the exasperated Trench, his improvement became conspicuous, so much so that, when in the state of nervous tension to which he had been brought, Trench began to let the plates fall about, Lady Althea could not help remarking that his behaviour was really rather the better of the two. When he had gone, she had a glow of satisfaction. People had laughed at her, but it was really all so easy, if one had tact, and understood.

Her enthusiasm was rather damped, the following morning, by the appearance of Mr. Harris. His manner of entry was, if anything, less that of a polished gentleman than it had been the day before.

He threw his bowler hat on to an adjacent chair.

"So you 'ad yer dinner with 'im yes'day," he said gruffly.

"Really, Mr. Harris," objected Lady Althea, "to whom do you refer?"

"That tall, swankin' bloke—*you* know. I watched artside. 'E was 'ere 'our and 'arf arter I lef'."

"Well, you left of your own accord, Mr. Harris," she suggested quite amiably. A little tact was what was wanted to deal with these ebullitions.

"Yus. Fair sickened I was. Too much lip's wot 'e's got. That's wot's the matter with *'im*. Urgh!" He gave a grunt of scorn.

"Please don't speak like that, Mr. Harris," she said. "I want you to be friends. Now, I shall have to begin all my little hints to you over again."

"Will y'ave yer dinner 'long o' me to-dye? That's wot I want t' know."

Lady Althea looked quickly away from his hands. It was really quite impossible. She pointed out to Mr. Harris that he had not quite got to the meal stage of lessons. He really had not remembered enough of the little hints she had given him yesterday. They must repeat the lesson. Besides, she was not going to lunch there to-day.

Mr. Harris only grunted, and wore a transpontine sneer upon his face. But then he became sorry—"'pologised 'ansum," as he expressed it—and was devoting himself with much earnestness, if with small success, to the solving of the intricacies of polite conversation, when Ligonier came in. Then, though he went so far, at a glance from Lady Althea, as to shake hands, his efforts ceased. He seemed to take a fearful joy in making his few audible remarks unfitted for repetition, and finally, with a quite unjustified whine that he was receiving no attention, and wasting his time, left the room, slamming the door.

Leggin's quick movement after him was restrained by a gesture from Lady Althea. He was exceedingly quick at taking hints, she reflected. A little remark of hers about ties and waistcoats had produced a marked improvement in his appearance, and the "h's" were beginning to positively grow in his conversation. When he took his departure, after a lengthened talk on the ways of the various kinds of people in this world, which tended unnoticeably to be all about herself, she reflected almost impatiently on the views of people who affected to find a difficulty in social intercourse with the masses.

Mr. Harris appeared next day with what he imagined apparently was a graceful apology.

"I could stand a bit o' lip from you," he said, "but scissors-legs gives me the 'ump. It's my belief," he added, with a note of inquiry, "that 'e don't like me kimmin' in 'ere. 'E's jealous, that's wot 'e is."

"Oh, nonsense!" Lady Althea replied to his startling suggestion. "And you and he must be very good friends. When he comes, you must try to find subjects in common."

But he did not come that morning.

"I see 'im in a taxicab yes'd'y art'noon," said Mr. Harris. "My belief is, 'e's come into a bit o' splosh, an's 'avin' a beano. Nar, if *I* was to 'ev a sight of a shiner er two, I tell you wot *I'd* do. Fust thing, I should kim along 'ere wiv a soovneer or somethink, not go gallivortin' orf to the 'Olborn Empire, or the like of that, along of a lot of torfs, an' tryin' to pawss meself orf to the gels as same as them."

Lady Althea did not like the picture. She hoped that, if Leggin had had some luck, that he was not doing anything foolish. He seemed so sensible. In the meanwhile, James Harris was becoming trying. He appeared to make no progress. No "h's" grew; when he tried to alter his natural gruff or whining intonation, he only succeeded in giving

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an extraordinary high-pitched imitation of what he called a "torf." His outlook on life, too, seemed to be unalterable, and his usual expression of slack-mouthed admiration was most embarrassing.

Leggin appeared the next day, showing that he was no deserter. He had, it appeared, been working things out by himself for a day, with the most happy results. If his accent had improved, so had his personal appearance. Assisting pawnbrokers was, apparently, quite a lucrative profession. His new clothes, even if purchased second-hand, must have cost quite a good deal, and the boots, tie, and hat—which was now on the model of those seen in the region of St. James's—betrayed no sign of cheapness or shoddiness. Really, she thought, he was quite pleasing to the eye as he respectfully escorted her to the Underground Station.

The sight, however, was not pleasing to Mr. Harris, who was watching their departure. He put his hands deep down into his pockets, kicked the kerb savagely, and growled to himself: "'Cos 'e's got a bit more splosh, that's w'y!"

The next morning he ventured to make a sarcastic hint to this effect to Lady Althea, who, between astonishment and anger, treated him rather severely. He then curled up, and craved for teaching and information. The particular subject he wanted to get up was, apparently, the daily customs and hours of the leisured classes, and those of what he called the "parricidic"—meaning, perhaps, "parasitic"—class of servants. He betrayed quite an unusual amount of intelligence, and went away with a fairly vivid picture of the customs of the idle rich and their idler servants, muttering, nevertheless, when he got outside: "'Cos 'e's got more splosh, that's w'y!"

* * * * *

A month had elapsed since Tristram Ligonier had become Alfred Leggin, and during the first three weeks of that period he had been a constant visitor to the office at Shoreditch—almost as constant a visitor as James Harris—and had shown an aptitude which was little short of marvellous for assuming the tones, phrases, and manners of good society. Then he came no more, and Lady Althea, left alone with Harris and an importunate charwoman for clients, began to wonder why. Without hinting for a moment that she was slackening in the least in well-doing, it must be stated it was then that, for the first time for several months, she accepted an invitation to dine in the world of Mayfair. The invitation was from the Freddie Vanes, and ended with the words: "We have a little surprise for you." She wondered mildly what it was. Probably someone who danced only with her hands, or her eyes, or her hair, or some other form of nonsense, such as amuses the do-nothing people.

She was late—a busy woman with real interests in life cannot obey clock-ticks for such trivial things as meals—and when she entered, all the other guests were assembled. She noticed that Clara Vane wore a look that was half embarrassed and half amused when she came to greet her, and that, when Freddie came up, he was more than usually suffused with smiles.

"My dear Althea," he said, taking both her hands, "to see you after all these ages is quite the nicest thing that has happened to us since we saw you last. You know most of us, don't you? At all events, I need not introduce you to my friend, Mr. Alfred Leggin. He tells me that he has been luckier than we have, and has had the light of your countenance several times quite lately."

Yes, it was true. There was Alfred Leggin, perfectly groomed, perfectly at ease, and clad in the most perfect evening-clothes. A hasty surmise as to the shop made her blush and look the more embarrassed of the two. Freddie Vane answered her look of inquiry.

"Oh, we did not meet in business," he said, with a smile. "Leggin and I have found that we have lots of interests in common—national defence, and housing, and—er—boy scouts, and that kind of thing."

"Oh!" said Lady Althea. She never remembered to have felt so stupid before.

Leggin's eyebrows went up, and he dropped his voice as he asked her—

"Does it bother you at all, my being here?" The last faint Cockney twang she had left him with had quite vanished. "I mean, is it true that

> East is East, and West is West,
> And never the twain shall meet?"

"Nonsense!" she said almost sharply, and her look said: "How did you get here?"

"Vane knows all about me," he explained. "He is trying an experiment, as you did."

"There is nothing new in the discovery that one man is as like another as two pins."

She resented the idea that Freddie Vane was experimenting with her as well as with Alfred Leggin. There was too much of an atmosphere of conspiracy about the whole party. The greetings of the other people

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were expectant and hasty, and there seemed a plot to leave her with Leggin. She found, as she surmised, that, when dinner was announced, he was her fate. Well, Mr. Freddie Vane should see that she treated Alfred Leggin just like any other man. When they were seated, she turned her back on him, and began talking to the man on her other side. She realised, of course, that it might be a little unkind to leave Leggin rudderless, as it were, in an unfamiliar sea, but he was part of the experiment, and she was not going to be experimented with with impunity.

Now, the young man on her right was a perfect searchlight on society and the drama—a sort of Asmodeus and Autolycus combined—and his flood of unconsidered trifles was generally regarded as the best fillip possible for breakfast, dinner, supper, tea. You were considered "safe" if you got him. But, curiously enough, after his first few sentences, Lady Althea, who had originally come to the party with some zest for a new insight into her old world, began to feel her attention wandering. She could not restrain an occasional, and then less occasional, side-glance at the smooth head and broad shoulders of her other neighbour. It was very odd. He was maintaining with perfect ease an apparently intensely amusing conversation with that most *difficile* of "debutantes," Lady Grizelda Bude. How was it done? She looked round the table at the other men—specimens of the House, White's, and the Guards' Club—and her question was answered. There was really no difference. Little wondering suspicions were overwhelmed by the proud conviction that she had been right. *There really was no difference.* He did not need her helping hand now, after a short month; he did not even seem to desire it. He was getting on extremely well. The girl, too, was pretty in the musical comedy manner affected by the aristocracy. Lady Althea hoped that she was not mischievous, and herself began to feel lonely. Her replies to Asmodeus began to get monosyllabic, until, coming to the inward conclusion that she had left off the habits of civilisation, he found a welcome audience on his other side.

Leggin was just turning to her, when someone opposite, almost mischievously, it seemed, asked him some question about the weight of tarpon, or something equally inane, and then Lady Grizelda claimed him again. But only for a moment. Leggin seemed to stop their talk half-way, and turned at last to Lady Althea with just the right look of happy release.

And then they talked. Lady Grizelda began to tire of her Guardsman, and to tap the floor with her pretty foot, and Asmodeus showed some resentment at not "going well," while the Freddie Vanes exchanged little amused glances, but they took no notice, until the whole table was aroused by the startled entrance of Mrs. Vane's maid.

"There's burglars in the house!" she gasped.

The guests half rose; the butler disappeared behind the serving screen to fortify himself against the shock; one of the footmen showed his sense of the acuteness of the situation by dropping the *bombe glacée*, while the others, not desiring to get "mixed up" in the unpleasantness, tried to look as though they were not there; and it was Leggin who was first to the door. Vane followed him.

"It's all right," he said. "We'll tackle them."

But the other men followed, and it is to be gathered from subsequent accounts that they searched in inconceivable places. Very soon they came back, all except Leggin and Vane.

"It's all right," said Asmodeus, with some relief. "Tristram's got him—there was only one."

Clara Vane had taken the vacant seat by Lady Althea, and her hand.

"I hope you don't feel nervous, dear," she said.

"Nervous. I never am nervous," replied Althea, with a bright flush in her cheeks. "But who is Tristram?"

"Mr. Ligonier, of course," said Clara Vane, and some of the guests gave her a warning look. "Oh, what's the use?" she went on. "His name isn't Leggin at all. He's Tristram Ligonier, and Freddie has known him ever since the Eton days—and, thank Heaven, they are both safe!"

The others looked guilty and embarrassed, and the bright spot went out of Lady Althea's cheek, and her lips were set.

The silence was broken by the return of Freddie Vane.

"Althea," he said, "Trist—I mean Leggin—wants a word with you. It's—it's something a bit important, I think. They are in the library."

Lady Althea's eyes flashed. For a moment it looked as though she would refuse to go: then, without replying, she rose and swept out of the room. Mr. Ligonier should have one word from her—one short word.

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Tristram Ligonier was standing by the fire, **looking** down on a dishevelled figure on a **chair** by his side. Lady Althea let her one **word** die on her lips as she saw that it was **James** Harris who sat there, gasping for **breath** and sobbing.

"You were the burglar?" exclaimed Lady Althea.

"I come to git somethink. I come to make things a bit more even between me and others," said Harris in an outburst. "I never 'ad no chance. Wot wye 'ad I got to

"'I come to make things a bit more even between me and others.'"

"Tell Lady Althea all about it," said Tristram.

"Noth'n to tell 'er nor you," gasped Harris.

"Oh, yes, I think there is. Lady Althea, Harris has been doing a foolish thing. He's got some wrong notions in his head."

come out on top? See 'ere. Time I come to see you darn at Shoreditch wasn't the first time I see yer. I bin 'engin' rarnd for a monf waitin' for sights of yer. You was dressed plain. There was no torf abart yer. You went into pore people's 'ouses—porer than wot I am. See? Wot I sez was,

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you could talk to me same as you could talk to them. Then 'e came along. I could see that you took to 'im, and 'e didn't let on to be any more clarss than wot I am. Must be somethink, I sez. I knew wot makes a difference to gels. It's 'tentions, little 'tentions—seein' 'em abart, sendin' 'em things. An' 'e'd got splosh. I see 'im in a texi. I see 'is new close. I was goin' to do better than 'im, and so I come 'ere to git somethink." He pointed to a diamond heart that lay upon the table. "I farnd that. That was for you—that was. I never knew oo you was, or anythink about this 'ouse, or that you'd come 'ere with 'im." The outburst had left him breathless. He had only enough left to add: "It's all 'is fault."

"No, I think that some of it is mine," said Lady Althea.

Harris got up from his chair. The shadow of the dock was on him, and he shuffled shivering up and down the other end of the room like a newly-caged animal. Lady Althea and Tristram looked into the fire and then at each other, and began to talk in a low voice.

It was quite a long time before Freddie Vane and his wife thought they would look for them. They found the library door open, and a draught blew from the front door.

"Hadn't we better send for the police?" said Freddie as he entered.

Tristram and Althea looked round vaguely. There was no James Harris.

"Great Scot!" said Freddie. "He must have got away!"

It was a guilty look that passed between Tristram and Althea. He must have got away!

"And my maid tells me that my diamond heart is missing," said Mrs. Freddie, with not unnatural annoyance.

Tristram's eye flashed to the table. Thank goodness, it was still there! He handed it to Mrs. Freddie.

She took it and dangled it before Althea, and said, looking from her to Tristram—

"Have you missed anything made on this pattern, Althea?"

Freddie put his arm round his wife's waist and swung her aside.

"Now, look here, you two people," he said, "I am going to give you some advice."

They both looked up at the word.

"Don't bother, Freddie," said Tristram. "I've had lots of it from Lady Althea, and I now am going to persuade her to take a little from me."

AH, WHEN?

I CAME at eve on a sunset field unknown to me,
Unknown and yet known.
Here did I run as a boy, or loitered a lover,
Ah, when?
I came at dawn on a river, visited never,
Strange yet unstrange,
For I could follow faithful the wind of that river
Away to the sea.
I was driven late in the night to the house of a stranger,
Never that house had I seen;
Though I ne'er slept in it, yet could I tell each room of it,
I knew my way.
At times a lonely face from a crowd looks out at me,
Startling me—wherefore?
That sudden flitting face I remember dimly,
Dimly familiar.
They played me music at midnight, never yet heard by me;
Unheard yet heard,
Ah, when?

STEPHEN PHILLIPS.

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PAMELA CAMPS OUT.

By CHARLES MARRIAGE.

TOLD her she was the last person in the world to try it, but she was perfectly determined, having just had a member of the Caravan Society to tea.

"I've always longed to, Dick—you know I have—and it would be such an absolute change from the usual way of having a holiday. We've yachted and we've shot; we've even been to a watering-place in Brittany and bathed in evening-dresses—at least, they were smart enough to be evening-dresses—we've motored through every impassable road in Great Britain; we've been abroad; we've taken a house in Yorkshire, and had all our friends asking their friends to it; we've——"

"Oh, all right!" I said. "But it's a very different thing from what you expect it to be, especially when it rains. And jolly hard work. Get White to tell you of some of his experiences on manœuvres."

"But we've not got to belong to a red or a blue army, and be suddenly wiped out, or have dirigibles dropping despatches on our heads, or lie under a hedge for a whole night in protective colouring and get rheumatism. Bless you, Major White *has* told me of his experiences on manœuvres—lots and lots of times. He always sleeps with his telescope by his side, for one thing. I don't intend taking a telescope, or anything much besides you," she added.

"You've never gone into the capacity for bad behaviour of an oil-stove, have you?" I asked. "Or tried washing up greasy plates in cold water, and not much of that?"

"How absurd you are! Why on earth shouldn't one be able to boil oneself up some water just because one is camping out? It isn't a question of cold water at all."

"It very often isn't," I replied—"merely a question of water, and I've known it a pretty persistent one sometimes. There's nothing like oil and methylated spirits for running out, too," I added reminiscently.

"Dick, you really are being aggravating. You see, you've never even asked about the water. As a matter of fact, there's a large stream quite near."

"Well, anyhow, I give you three days of it at the outside. After that, the nearest farmhouse, a hot meal there, and a Bradshaw."

"All right, Dick. But we'll try it first, and you'll just see how I shall love it. Now, do be a darling, and don't grump so."

The argument was here closed in the usual way, after which there is never anything to be done but to smooth my hair down again, relight my pipe, and assume a pacified smile which I don't feel yet.

"When does Miss Blessingway say you may have the caravan?" I resumed, I own not very enthusiastically.

"In a fortnight's time. And there are two tents—one for sleeping in and one for cooking in. If it rains, there are sleeping-shelves in the caravan, but I expect they'd be a little uncomfortable."

"It's quite possible," I said.

"I don't care. I've made up my mind to some discomforts, of course; and we shall be so tired after the hard work that we shall be able to sleep anywhere. That's the blessing of manual labour. And think how jolly it will be to wash every morning in a stream that you can hear babbling as you lie in bed. I shan't take many dresses——"

"A bathing-dress and a mackintosh are what it really comes to," I said.

"Oh, no, Dick. I do believe in keeping up appearances a little when you're roughing it. Fancy if we got like the Strettons when they were at Bernéval! You know, they boasted beforehand that they were only going to take their oldest gardening clothes away with them, because it was to be a real holiday; and Clara used to go out of her way to wear half a tennis shoe and an old lobster basket for a hat. And then they met that charming French count, who fell in love with one of the girls. I always wondered what the family looked like at the *déjeuner de fiançailles*.

"No, just because we're going to lead the simple life, I'm not going to eat out of the dish the food's cooked in, and behave like a prehistoric cave-woman. That's where some people are so idiotic, I think. They say they're

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doing this sort of thing 'for a change,' and seem to think that it's their duty to behave like pigs in less than a week, and not to bother about their nails being dirty, and growing a beard, and eating their food half raw."

"Who is 'they'?" I asked. "Are these more of White's experiences?"

"No; but I can see how easy it would be to get into it. In fact, I know perfectly well it will be an awful effort, after a day or two, to keep my nails manicured, and force myself into anything but a different blouse for dinner. But I'm not going to let it grow on me."

"I don't suppose we shall be there quite long enough for the blouse to take root properly," I said; "but I quite agree with the principle of the thing. You'd better make a list of the things we shall want to take in the cooking line," I added. "They're really more important than evening-dresses."

"Yes, I will, Dick. But I'm awfully glad you agree with me about not letting things slide, and being untidy, and only washing up once at the end of the day, and things like that. And we'll do everything ourselves, and not have a servant to help, as Miss Blessingway and her friend did. We'll do our own cooking properly, too, and not have a store of tinned things to fall back on, and a hamper from town. All the same, a hamper from town isn't a bad idea," she added unexpectedly.

"What about the Forbes's when they were on their honeymoon?" I said. "Didn't somebody or other lend them a disused tram-car in a field? What happened? Are they divorced yet?"

"Oh, no, Dick, I don't call that camping out properly. They had all their meals at a cottage quite near, and Ethel told me herself they only slept out one night. Besides, they had friends with a billiard-room and a tennis-court quite near. But, for goodness' sake, don't look so miserable about it, Dick darling! You remind me of the illustrations in somebody or other's 'Lives of the Saints.' They always look as if they had liver trouble. It'll be lovely when we're there—you know it will. And you haven't got a liver, really."

"I wouldn't mind in the least if I thought you'd like it," I replied, "but you'll simply loathe it."

"I shan't, really. Really and truly, Dick, I shall love it. I shall be awfully busy, too, and I love being busy. I want to do the thing thoroughly."

"All right," I said at last. I began to see daylight. "We will."

A fortnight later we were standing in the middle of a field, and I was examining the exact state of cleanliness of Miss Blessingway's cooking utensils.

"Did you say Miss Blessingway had someone to help her, Pamela? 'To do the dirty work,' I think you said. If so, he's done it well."

"Yes, she had a farm-hand, who came every evening and washed up everything she'd used all through the day. He was to have left everything perfectly ready for us, and—— I say, there are no sheets on the bed. Dick—I've just looked in—only blankets as thick as horse-cloths."

"Well, of course not, darling. You'll be glad the blankets are thick, too, when you wake up in a sea-mist to-morrow morning."

"But, Dick, I simply can't sleep in blankets—they tickle so. Oh, *look!*"

She had undone one of the corners of the tent that was turned back from the doorway, and surprised a hundred or more earwigs.

"They're so frightfully near where my head will be," she said rather piteously. "Do you think I could sleep in my sponge-bag? Ugh!"

She didn't really say "Ugh!" because nobody ever does, but it was the sound by which all women indicate earwigs, a whelk-stall, and men they very much dislike.

"I remember once," I said, "when I was camping in Australia, waking up with the feeling that something had been done to me."

"And was it earwigs?"

"No, a sheep was very gently nibbling my face. But then, of course, I shouldn't have hung my head out of the doorway as I did."

"Well, I'm going to unpack now, and if you want any help with the dinner, just call. I'd love to make an omelette."

"I don't think you'll get an omelette to-night," I said, having come to an end of my examination of the frying-pans. "That farm-hand of Miss Blessingway's must have had a theory that fat is a good natural protection for the bottoms of all frying-pans."

"Oh, Dick, how disgusting! We can't possibly start cooking till everything's been scalded in tons of boiling water. What a mess everything's in! It's a blessing we've got galantine and tinned fruit salad in our hamp——"

She caught my eye. Like a perfect gentleman, I said nothing.

At dinner, after Pamela had said we'd

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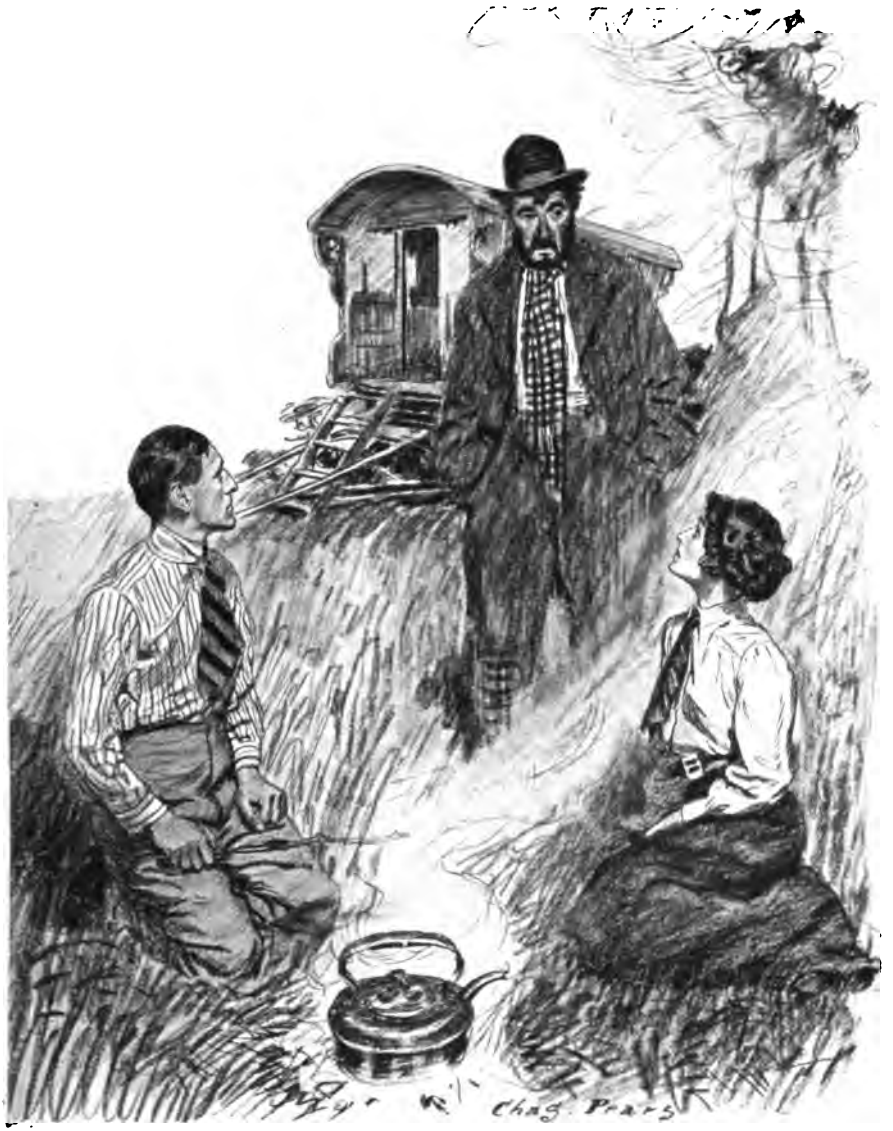
'orego coffee that night, because she was too ired to make it, but that we must remember ıot to get slipshod, she caught me looking at ıer flannel blouse, or thought she did. I wasn't particularly.

"I was so awfully busy unpacking our

After breakfast next morning—Pamela owned she had only washed bits of herself in the stream, because it was so cold—we were visited by a more than usually disreputable-looking tramp.

"Do you want any 'elp, mum?" he said,



"'No, thank you,' she said cheerfully; 'we are doing everything ourselves.'"

things, and packing away the things Miss Blessingway said we might use of hers," she explained apologetically. "Just fancy! Horrid yellow soap on her washstand! But, oh, Dick dear, it's being rather fun, isn't it?" I thought this came rather dutifully, but perhaps she was tired.

as he looked at Pamela watching me while I boiled some water.

"No, thank you," she said cheerfully; "we are doing everything ourselves."

"Because I've a wife and ten children starving at home, and I gives 'em every penny I earn when I gets any. Walked

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fifteen miles yesterday looking for a job. Little 'un ill, too," he added, as an afterthought. "'E might be about the age o' yourn, mum."

"I haven't got any children," said Pamela quickly, growing a little pink. "How old is he?"

"Just about two years old, 'e is, mum. Yus, two 'e'll be—why, strike me, if termorrer ain't 'is birthday, now I come ter think of it! And a prettier child you couldn't wish to see."

"Dick," called out Pamela, "shall we let this man wash your pots and pans for you just for to-day? He's hard up for a job, and—— Oh, very well, if you really want them clean. But here's ten shillings for you," I heard her say to him—"one for each of the children. And if you like to come back to-morrow, I'll find you some odd jobs, and give you half-a-crown for them."

"It's the little boy of two that did it," she said, when he had gone, which he did remarkably quick, I thought. "Don't look at me so reproachfully, Dick. They are so heavenly at that age, and I should like him to be able to have something nice to eat if he's ill. No, I don't believe he was a fraud. His voice sounded quite different when he began talking about his kiddy. Well, we shall see whether he comes back or not to-morrow."

It was four o'clock that day before we had time to go for a walk and explore the neighbourhood, and then a lame sea-gull detained us, and Pamela went back to fetch food to make it come home with us. She brought some brawn, a piece of tinned pine-apple, and a sardine. The sardine was a success, and after a day or two, when the bird was firmly installed as our only household pet, we gave up tinned fish for breakfast, and said we liked new-laid eggs better, which was true. Finally, I had to enter into an arrangement with a small boy to bring us whatever he could find in the way of fish daily, till further orders.

On the third day after our arrival I found Pamela sitting on the bed looking rather disconsolate. It was pouring with rain, and we had just found a place in the roof of the cooking-tent which threw an entirely new light on the hitherto inexplicable behaviour of the matches which were kept underneath it.

"It would be rather nicer if we didn't have to work so hard, wouldn't it, Dick? I mean, you see, we've been here three days now, and we've never had more than half an hour to do what we like in, except after dinner, and then I'm too tired."

"What about Miss Blessingway's farm-hand friend?" I said, carefully not looking in Pamela's direction.

"Well, to tell you the truth, I went round to that farm this afternoon, just to inquire if the man had any spare time now, and I told him that, if he'd like to come round to-morrow, it was just possible there'd be a boot or two to clean. He didn't seem very surprised to see me. And fancy, Dick, he said Miss Blessingway and her friend started just like we did, doing everything themselves, and that they came round to him on the third day, too. It was the washing-up they couldn't stick, he said. But I told him I didn't mind that a bit since I'd discovered my patent way of getting the worst off with sods of grass first. By the by, he warned me of a man who's a frightful drunkard in the village, who is sure to come round asking for work. He says he never takes it even if you offer him some, and one generally misses something after he's left. Oh, Dick, you don't think——"

"Don't let's ask for a description of him," I said hastily.

That evening, at the meal Pamela still insisted on calling "dinner," she asked me if I didn't think it a sensible idea for a woman to tie her hair up with ribbon when camping out, instead of using hairpins?

"You see, Dick, the more one simplifies things to do with dress on occasions like this, the better, I think. That's why I like wearing your sweater so." And she looked down gratefully at it. "It does away with the bother of ties and brooches and collars, and things. Besides, there really isn't time to think much of one's appearance when one is as busy as we are, is there?"

If the weather hadn't been so abominable, and the Hiltons hadn't looked us up in their car next day, we might have stayed much longer than a week, I suppose. They took us back to dinner with them, and Pamela said she had quite forgotten how nice lots of silver made a table look; but she added hastily that the view of the bay and the lights of Bynmouth, as you lay in bed with the tent open, took a lot of beating.

I heard her telling Hilton she only wished Dick hadn't to be back in town so soon, and that we both hoped we might be able to come back again later, but that she rather doubted it.

Although I never knew what it was that took us up to town within the week, I am sure it was as important as Pamela made out, or, of course, we should have stayed.

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THE LEGACY.

By E. M. JAMESON.

MIRANDA ORPINGTON opened the front door wide, and stood for a moment looking out across the white, silent land that stretched to the horizon line. The last flaring streamers of sunset had long died out, and now there was only a grey solitude through which a few snowflakes fluttered slowly to the ground, like feathers dropped from a pigeon's wing.

The first snows of winter had come. The scene held a certain fascination for one unaccustomed to it, one who saw the picturesque side, and did not realise the hardships. It was Miranda's first winter in the wilds.

She stood there a moment longer, though the clear, keen air caused her breath to come short and quick, and numbed her finger-tips. To anyone approaching, the interior must have breathed a welcome. The ruddy light from the room streamed across the snow like a beacon fire, and even when Miranda closed the door, a little uncurtained window to the right still sent out a narrow glint towards the darkness. The houseplace, half parlour, half kitchen, was comfortable enough, orderly, and clean. The table was set for a meal, a kettle raised its voice in a droning hum, the odour of freshly-made coffee was in the air.

Uncle William was a well-to-do man, and his wife thrifty. She now lay ill in bed upstairs. Miranda went up to see if she needed anything, but the sick woman was asleep, the querulous lines of her face smoothed out. Ordinarily, like Martha, she was apt to "be troubled about many things." Her absence from the household caused the surroundings to seem extraordinarily quiet.

Sometimes the austere solitude of the country made Miranda half afraid. She was used to the town, with its light and movement and never-ceasing sense of human companionship. It was Peter alone who made the country bearable; she had little in common with her relatives.

As she came downstairs again, all the light in the room seemed to leave the shining pots and pans and candlesticks to concentrate upon her. She sat down near the lamp and drew a strip of newspaper from her pocket, reading it slowly with troubled eyes.

All day, in the midst of her duties, she had struggled with herself, and only an hour or two ago she had made up her mind to do the right thing.

"If he goes, as of course he will, life won't be worth living," she told herself, and for a moment the lamplight swam in a blurred mist.

She was still sitting there, her chin on her palm, when Peter came in. As he stood looming in the doorway, the snowflakes melting on his coat, there was some quality about his hugeness that filled Miranda with a kind of exultant pride. She would have been very proud of Peter, she thought, if she had been his mother or sister, or even—she always checked herself here.

She did so now, as Peter, hanging up his coat in a little recess, approached the table. He was unlike any of the men about the countryside. For the matter of that, Miranda had never met anyone like him in town.

He smiled down at her now in his frank, almost boyish way, his glance travelling over the comfortable surroundings, and then back to her where she sat, the newspaper cutting in her hand.

"You look like the spirit of the hearth, sitting there in that red frock of yours," he said meditatively, "only it happens to be a stove—base substitute! Strange how one person can create an atmosphere, while another leaves the same place bleak and comfortless."

"He means aunt," said Miranda to herself, as she met Peter's eyes. They contained a generous meed of admiration, but Miranda, with a numb sense of disappointment, realised that there was nothing deeper.

He and she had been good friends from the first, but on his side there had been no approach to any feeling stronger than friendship. Miranda was too pretty not to know her power. She had been offered more than her share of love and admiration.

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Peter was different. In spite of his shabby clothes, he was essentially well-bred and a gentleman. Like many another ne'er-do-well, he had drifted into the country, necessity having driven him finally to work—as he had never been brought up to work.

It was Miranda who had persuaded Uncle William to employ him, though it is possible that Peter's thews and sinews may have said a good word for him.

Uncle William was away for the day, and would not return until to-morrow morning. They had their meal together. Overhead, the sick woman slept. Peter, hungry and chilled, made a good meal, but Miranda only drank one cup of coffee, and crumbled on her plate a piece of home-made cake.

"I am not hungry," she said, in reply to his comment, and she smiled half forlornly across at him. "There's something worrying me."

His eyes lingered on her. In spite of his lack of sentiment towards her, she had brought a new element into existence. For the past few years he had knocked about the world roughly with men not of his own kind. He had roughened with them until some semblance of a home life and contact with Miranda had brought him back to other ways.

He said nothing until the sturdy little "help," with Miranda's assistance, had cleared the table and shut herself into the kitchen beyond, to the clatter of crockery and an accompaniment of hymn tune.

Peter turned from the window as Miranda came down from the sick-room.

"Do you mind if I smoke?" He asked the question every evening, greatly to the scorn of Uncle William, who thought it an unnecessary form of politeness.

Miranda shook her head. She loved the evenings when Peter smoked his pipe in silent contentment, and she sat near the lamp with her needlework.

Uncle William generally dozed in the corner near the stove. To-night he was not there. Miranda blessed the errand that gave her so much more of Peter's company.

He watched her through the smoke wreaths, seeing her, for some reason, under a different aspect to-night. Perhaps it was the doubt on Miranda's face that made her appear less self-reliant and practical than usual. That picture of her waiting in the light and warmth was silhouetted on his mind. His eyes lingered on the downbent brown head, on the soft curve of throat and chin, and the long lashes that swept her cheeks as her needle went in and out.

Something dawned in his heart that had not been there yesterday. In all the silent world outside, nothing seemed to stir; the only sound that came to them was the droning hymn tune from the cheerful little "help" in the room beyond.

"I must tell him about it," said Miranda, as she threaded another needle, "though it seems as if I couldn't bear to let him go." She looked up and met Peter's glance, then suddenly she put her hand to her pocket and drew out the strip of newspaper. She smoothed it on the blue and red check table-cloth, and pushed it towards him.

Peter rose, laying down his pipe. "You want me to read it?"

Miranda nodded, going on with her work.

He bent nearer the lamplight, and Miranda saw the close-cropped crispness of his hair and the tanned line of forehead. She turned her eyes away resolutely, and it was not until he straightened himself that she looked up again. His glance was no longer lazy, but keen and alert as she had never seen it. The glint of steel was in it, making Miranda thrill. She had always thought him too easy-going.

"Where did you find it?" he asked, indicating the newspaper slip.

"It is part of a newspaper that lined a small drawer in my room. It looked discoloured, and I was just going to throw it away when I saw your name with another added on—Peter Crowley Armadale. Though you only call yourself Peter Crowley, I thought you might chance to be Armadale as well?"

He nodded, then balanced himself on the arm of the big rocking-chair close by. His face wore a bitter smile.

"Dropped it out of consideration for their feelings. I was the only black sheep, Miranda, out of a flock of seven. My father listened to tales, and packed me off to Canada with a good sum of money instead of the proverbial shilling which Ramsay, my eldest brother, wanted me to have. I was a young fool—the money soon went. There were numbers ready to help me spend it." He laughed, and Miranda turned her head away. There was something now in his face less good than the glint of battle. "And I came near starvation. Bah, it was an awful experience! We'd always had plenty at home; but now a hungry man, wherever I meet him, won't have to ask me twice. I got a few odd jobs, and then I drifted here.

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What a good little pal you've been, Miranda! I've done you credit, haven't I? Your uncle's not been above giving me the work of two men, but I've worried through somehow. I made up my mind to stint and save while I gained experience, and then I had thoughts of a little place of my own—some land, a shanty, and independence. Ye powers, independence again!" He stretched his arms out wide. "And now, thanks to my father, it's in view, close to my hand if I choose to grasp it. They turned him against me, but he was always just, bless him! I wish I'd been a better son."

He took up his pipe and knocked out the ashes noisily. When he returned to the table, his face wore its normal expression.

"As soon as I've saved enough for my passage, I will go and claim it," he said. "Ten thousand pounds, Miranda! Think of it! That's fifty thousand dollars in your money. Great!"

"But don't you understand?" Miranda spread out the crumpled wisp of yellowed newspaper, and pointed to the date. "You must go at once, Peter; you'll barely do it. The newspaper's nearly two years old."

"Well?" asked Peter.

"It says that, if you do not claim it within two years, the legacy will lapse to the eldest son."

Like many another big man, Peter's brains were not very quick-working. He looked at the date and he read over the advertisement. When he glanced at Miranda again, a vast disappointment had overspread his face.

"You can write," said Miranda.

Peter's finger this time indicated a line of print: "Must be claimed in person."

"Confound it! I dare say the dear old man thought it would fetch me from the depths in person." He rose and stamped about the room, then loomed over her. "No good, Miranda—it can't be done. I'm paid out for my fooling with a vengeance. Fifty thousand dollars!"

But at last Miranda really rose above herself. "There is time," she said. "You must go right away to-morrow, Peter, and catch the next boat. That will leave Uncle William time to get someone in your place, and, besides, there is very little doing that he can't manage with the help he has. Think! Fifty thousand dollars!"

He gave a short laugh. "And where's my passage money to come from, pray, even if I could get enough for the railway journey? No, I'm baulked on all sides."

"Uncle William might lend it to you—if he thought he was certain to get it back with interest."

Peter laughed ironically. "I thought you were a practical girl. Uncle William never takes a risk."

"He is just too mean for words," agreed Miranda. Then she thought a moment, and coloured hotly. "Peter," she said, in a very small voice, "I wonder if you'd let *me* lend you the passage money, and something in your pocket besides."

"*You?* Why, my dear child, how could you? I know you're nearly as hard up as I am. Your uncle doesn't pay you much, I'm certain. He grinds everyone down to the lowest rate."

Miranda looked up quickly, began to say something, then stopped.

"But father now and then gives me a little for my pocket," she said. "He is not nearly so close-fisted as Uncle William. I have to buy my own frocks, of course."

"And very pretty ones at that." He glanced up and down the demure red woollen gown, with its neat collar and wristbands of embroidered lawn.

"They are as simple as can be," said Miranda.

"That's why they're so nice, I suppose," said Peter in a puzzled way. "Anyhow, there's something about them that's just right. Will I have the money from you? I couldn't borrow your little savings, child. No man worth the name could."

"You must," said Miranda insistently—"you must. It's there doing nothing. Let me treat it as an investment, Peter. You shall give me interest, if you like, and as high as you like. Don't—*don't* spoil all your chances for the future by refusing. I've got it here upstairs, locked away."

She rose, but as Peter still shook his head, she returned and did the very best thing for her cause by bursting into tears, her head on the table.

Peter stooped over her. She quivered as his hand touched her shoulder. "D'you feel so badly about it?" His voice was indulgent as if she had been a child. "Well, then, I'll borrow your little bit, Miranda. But supposing I'm too late for the legacy, I should be ages and ages paying you back."

Miranda sat up, putting her hair from her eyes. All her little coquetries were forgotten. She had blossomed suddenly into womanhood. "I don't care if you never pay it back!"

"But I do," said Peter.

"Don't imagine that you're going to fail."

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Miranda flamed into vivid action as she spoke. "Set your teeth hard and *get at things*, Peter; you're too slow for words. You make me feel just mad!"

Peter stared at her in amazement. He had never supposed that she could look like this. Hitherto, in his eyes, she had seemed a pretty little girl, with a few airs and graces which had amused him, but now, flushed and inspired, she looked positively beautiful. Some of her own fire stirred in his veins. He laughed suddenly; then, sitting down, he drew from his pocket a notebook, and tore off a slip. Still smiling, he began to write.

"We'll treat it all on the square, Miranda. You shall have an I.O.U. How much are you going to invest in me? A hundred dollars? Why, you are quite an heiress!" He went on scribbling, then, leaning his chin on his great fist, ruminated pleasurably for a moment. "Jove, I'd like to circumvent my precious brother Ramsay! I owe him one for the bad turns he did me with my father. He and Querle, the solicitor, are hand in glove. I'd not trust 'em with a farthing of my money. Ramsay is the relative my legacy is to go to. Yes, Miranda, I'll take your advice, as well as your poor little savings, and be off to-morrow. Uncle William may go hang! He's had his pound of flesh out of me twice over, and, as you say, there's little doing this weather."

He rose, and went to and fro through the room, as if longing to be away.

Miranda, in a strange medley of sensations, watched him. Once among his own kind, he would never come back; in serving him, she had done herself an ill turn. Yet over all the troubled longing was a sense of pride that she had been able to help him.

He held out to her the slip of paper containing his promise to pay. She took it and tore it passionately into fragments, flinging them upon the floor.

"Do you suppose I can't trust you without that?" she demanded, her eyes darkening in her small face. "Do you think——"

She turned and fled up the staircase and into the invalid's room, where she stayed for an hour. Later, when she saw that the lamp was out, and the place plunged in darkness, she slipped down again and picked up, one by one, the scraps of torn paper—not because they contained Peter's promise to pay, but because his hand had touched them. They were all she would have.

* * * * *

It was Miranda who next day packed Peter's few belongings into a suit-case of her own, and helped to smooth down Uncle William. She it was who drove with him to the nearest town, and saw him off, and who, dry-eyed and practical, gave him much good advice as to procedure. There had been a throbbing moment when, checking the old roan in the midst of the waste, Peter's hand had held hers closely, and he had leaned towards her. The least response from Miranda, and he would have kissed her. He wanted to badly, for the something which had dawned into being in his heart last night had taken root there, and already sent out sturdy little shoots.

But Miranda drew into her wrappings and made no sign. Fortunately, he could not hear how suffocatingly her pulses beat, or guess how desperately she wanted that kiss. Not so long ago she would have let him kiss her easily enough—she had been kissed before—but this new, solemn, inexplicable feeling was different.

Peter straightened himself again and shook the reins, looking ahead between the roan's pricking ears until they reached the station.

All in a moment, it seemed, he had gone. Miranda's face was wet for a moment as she drove the roan back again—to a life empty of Peter, but filled with Uncle William and a querulous invalid.

"If he had wanted to kiss me because he really cared, I'd have let him," she said to herself, with swelling throat, "but maybe it was just his way of showing he was grateful for the dollars—*my savings!*" She dried her eyes and gave a tremulous laugh. "I guess father 'd be surprised at the use I'm putting them to. Soon as ever aunt's better, I'll get back home to New York. A party or two, and maybe a theatre now and then, will take the ache away. And, anyhow, though I'm certain to get the money back sooner or later, I've seen the last of Peter. Something tells me so." Her face quivered, and then she threw up her head proudly. "I'm glad—yes, I'm glad! I'd do more than that for Peter to prosper, even though its mighty bad for Miranda Orpington." She laughed again and dried her eyes. "I suppose this is the genuine thing," she told herself presently—"real love, not a silly make-believe, because I'd do myself a bad turn any day to do Peter a good one. I've never felt just that way before."

* * * * *

There were still two days to spare to the lapsing of the legacy when Peter landed at Liverpool. They had been delayed by fog, and the docks were swathed in it—yellow,

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impenetrable. It got into his throat and nostrils and eyes with damp, clinging persistence.

He was glad to find himself in the shelter of a train bound for London. Once there, the rest, he thought, would be easy. Miranda's loan was wearing low; there was little left in his pocket after he had bought a few things—a good second-hand overcoat, a couple of collars, a tie, and a hat.

It was curious, and not altogether pleasing, to think that Miranda's money was paying for it all, even for the shave in which he indulged before a simple dinner.

In his seven years' absence there seemed to be few changes. One or two new buildings had been erected, old ones cleared away, but the small eating-house he remembered so well remained practically unchanged, and the same varied tide of humanity still swept through the Strand.

The offices of Querle, Son & Querle, Solicitors, up a side-street, were closed. He called there on his way to the Temple, where his brother Ramsay had chambers. Even if Ramsay were out of town, he had until Monday evening to make his presence known.

The light and the movement, and the never-ending line of motor-'buses and taxi-cabs interested him. They had been novelties when he left England; now they dominated everything. He missed the hansoms, with their light jingle of bells and their airy, camel-like way of threading the traffic. They were so rare now that he exclaimed with pleasure at the sight of one near the Savoy, and, almost without his own volition, he hailed it as it came along. Once inside, he felt ruefully in his pocket and brought out a handful of small coins.

"I'll bank my cheque on Monday," he said, with the laugh of a school-boy; "and, anyhow, Miranda—bless her!—wouldn't grudge me a shilling's worth. 'Pon my word, I'll do a music-hall this evening, still on borrowed capital." He laughed again, and the cabman's face appeared at the aperture in the roof. "All right, cabby—go ahead. Only my way of enjoying myself. Hansoms always make me feel a gay dog."

"Wish they'd do the same for other people," said the man ruefully. "They're out of favour, sir, our poor little kebs. Who'd ever 'a thought it?"

"Who, indeed?" said Peter, as the trap-door descended again. He felt for a second shilling. "Miranda wouldn't grudge it," he told himself again, leaning well forward in order to miss nothing.

He was too great a lover of country things ever to live among crowding bricks and mortar, but there was an intoxication in London, after all, with its teeming thousands on pleasure bent. Perhaps it was because Miranda's half-dollar paid for it that Peter never quite forgot that cab ride. Out of the hundreds he had taken, it stood out in his memory clean-cut and momentous. Long, long afterwards, there came back to memory the lights and the crowds, the shrill hooting of the motors, the riot of colour and movement, and then the comparative quiet of the Embankment, with its serpent-like line of trams, and, beyond, the rippling blackness of the water, all the blacker in contrast with the lights that shone upon it from the craft gliding by.

His hilarity was gone; he felt a sudden loneliness.

"I wish Miranda could see it just like this," he told himself. "I wonder——"

And then the cab stopped. He had reached his destination.

He stood for a few moments looking up. The windows, for the most part, seemed in darkness. Week-ends, among other things, had grown enormously in popularity during his absence. Several casements were illuminated; perhaps Ramsay's were amongst them.

Peter, in all the beneficent possibilities of his legacy, was prepared to be magnanimous. Ramsay and he had never got on. There were ten years between them in age, and æons of space in characteristics. Peter, in his easy-going fashion, showed a simplicity that would have made practical Miranda smile.

There was none of the glint of battle in his eyes, but only good-fellowship when, after a moment's waiting, Ramsay himself opened the door.

His narrow, clean-shaven face changed at the sight of Peter. It grew chalk-white, antagonistic. He made no attempt at greeting, but just stood there, transfixed, staring.

"Hullo, Ramsay! Take me for a ghost?" Peter laughed and extended a mighty fist. "I'm genuine flesh and blood, you can feel."

But Ramsay's hand remained on the door. The other he passed over his face as if to mould it into control.

There was some semblance of a smile upon it the next moment, and he drew back for the other to enter.

The room, in its soft lighting and warmth of fire-glow, was comfortable, even luxurious. Ramsay Armadale was something of a collector of old prints and old furniture. A box of

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cigars was on the table, together with a nearly-empty decanter of whisky and some glasses. Beside them were a few legal-looking papers tied with pink tape.

Ramsay, with a quick movement, swept them aside, flinging them into a flat basket on the writing-table. All the time his face kept its rigid, chalk-like appearance, and he did not look at Peter.

The latter, in silence, watched him.

Ramsay was a tall man, but Peter topped him by half a head. Ramsay was spare in build, deceptive to the eye. He had enormous strength in his long, sinewy hands and arms. There was about him the air of a man fagged by anxiety, over-driven.

Peter's glance followed the papers.

"Briefs coming in well, I see. You were always one of the workers, Ramsay."

The other man crammed the papers down harder.

"Busy enough," he said ungraciously. "You look fit."

His cold glance wandered over Peter, and unconsciously his hand clenched itself at his side. Peter made a step forward.

"I say, Ramsay, for the dear old man's sake, let's keep up some semblance of friendship. We never got on well, but, during the short time I'm at home, let us at least be civil."

Ramsay walked over to the hearth. His thoughts seemed detached; there was an air about him as if he listened. Then he gave his attention to Peter.

"I suppose you heard something—you found out——"

Peter dropped into a chair.

"It was by the merest fluke a friend in Canada came across an old newspaper and showed it to me. It was nearly two years old. Give you my word, Ramsay, in another few days it would have been too late. Think of it! I've had enough of lean years. I mean to lay this out well. I've learned to appreciate money at last."

Ramsay gave a short laugh like a snarl.

"Ah, you have, have you? Most of us know its value. It gets tighter every day, somehow."

He poured out for himself a stiff whisky and soda. Then, not appearing to notice how little remained, pushed the decanter towards Peter. The latter shook his head.

"Failing me, the money would go to you?"

Ramsay dug his heel into the coals.

"As it happens, it was to come to me," he said. Then, with a carelessness a little at variance with his former remarks, he shrugged his shoulders. "Fortunately, I've more work than I can manage. My briefless days are over."

"That's good," said Peter. "It struck me that you looked a bit glum when you recognised me. Ten thousand isn't to be despised. And then, of course, you had every reason to believe that I wouldn't turn up. Sorry, but, y'know, it's the fortune of war, and if you're so well off, you won't grudge it. I expect you succeeded to a bit, too?"

"Fifteen thousand," acknowledged Ramsay, with apparent magnanimity.

"That's all right," said Peter, for the second time. He rose and looked about him for his hat. He had not removed his coat. "I'm off to one of the music-halls," he said. "Come with me."

Ramsay shook his head, then he seemed to hesitate.

"Might come a little later on, perhaps. Suppose you stay here for a short time and glance over the papers? I'm bound to go out for half an hour to see a chap I know on business. It's a thing that's rather urgent. You won't mind?" His tone was more cordial than it had been hitherto.

Peter, only too glad to be friendly, acquiesced, taking off his overcoat.

"You've comfortable quarters here. It will be no hardship to wait."

Ramsay examined the decanter. Very little whisky remained in it. He took it over to the sideboard and half filled it, bringing it back to the table presently to where Peter, after lighting a cigar, was looking over the evening papers.

"Thanks!" said Peter, a little touched by this attention. "I'll wait for you. You know what comfort means, Ramsay. Always were a bit of a Sybarite, eh? Do you remember once how you——" His hand was on the decanter.

Ramsay, cutting short his reminiscences with a nod, went out of the room.

"Surly brute still," said Peter to himself, as he poured a modicum of spirit into the tumbler. "Seemed to be expecting someone." He set the glass down, for just at that moment the telephone bell on the writing-table rang.

Peter went over with the intention of stating his brother's temporary absence. He took up the receiver.

"Hallo! Are you there?" he asked.

A voice replied, with a kind of urgency in its note: "That you, Armadale?"

"It's Armadale," said Peter, with some

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truth, and without for the moment meaning to masquerade as his brother.

"Are you alone?" The voice was low-pitched, but clear, with a kind of tenseness in its tones. "I'm Querle," it went on, before Peter could reply. "Listen, Armadale! Are you there? It's that confounded legacy, you know. Time's up on Monday. Jove, won't it be a mercy to feel we're safe? I don't know what's up with me, but I've got the jumps badly to-night, as if something was going to happen. Do you feel that way, I wonder?"

"No," said Peter untruthfully. He, too,

"'Don't let him go! He means to expose us. It's ruin, I tell you!'"

spoke in a low tone. There was a certain family likeness between his voice and Ramsay's.

"You are such a cold devil," said Querle. "Wish I was built that way. Do you know, after all, I didn't go to the club. I'm 'phoning from the office. Came back here to do some work. Had an idiotic idea that somehow he might—— Are you there?"

"Yes." Even in his own ears Peter's voice sounded grim. "He might——"

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"Turn up at the eleventh hour," said Querle, with an apologetic laugh. "Don't think I'll come round to-night, after all.

"You'd better," said Peter. "There are one or two matters I want to talk over that can't be said over the 'phone. Must see you to-night. Come at once. Take a taxi, will you?"

"All right." The answering voice was sulky. "Don't know why on earth I should. Are you there?"

But Peter rang off. He walked away to the hearth-rug, and thought a moment. So there was something, after all, between Ramsay and the lawyer. The latter must have been off his balance to risk talking like that over the wires. He thought a moment, then listened. Finally he walked over to the door, and found it locked. He twisted the handle to and fro noiselessly, though he had the landing to himself. Ramsay had turned the key upon him. Peter, trembling with anger, walked back to the table, wondering how long he was to be in durance vile. He never doubted that Ramsay had gone to the club to intercept Querle, if possible. Mechanically he took up the tumbler containing the whisky and soda. The telephone bell had interrupted him. Then, with the same quiet, almost mechanical movement, he put it down again, untasted. It was just possible Ramsay might have drugged it to keep him quiet. He looked a desperate man.

Peter sat down heavily, then rose again and slipped on his overcoat, keeping his hand in his pocket, and taking up his position on the hearth-rug. It was extraordinarily quiet up here; only the sound of a distant motor-horn broke the silence, or the siren from a steamer on the river. A haze that was hardly a fog overhung the outside world. It seemed a long time before there was any sound close at hand.

Then the door-handle was tried, and, after a moment, the key was turned in the lock.

Peter heard it rasp a little, as if it wanted oiling. He left his place, and stood with his back to the wall, facing the door.

It was only when it had swung to behind Querle that the latter saw it was not Ramsay. He glanced at Peter, not recognising him at first, then looked around the room.

"Armadale here? He spoke to me on the 'phone a few minutes ago."

"You don't remember me, Mr. Querle? I'm Peter Armadale," Peter said, with grim politeness, "and you spoke to me over the wires a few minutes ago."

Querle suddenly went white.

"Won't you sit down?" Peter waved towards a chair, and Querle sat down, still staring. What had he said? How much did Peter guess? Bah, everything, of course!

"You didn't expect to see me," went on Peter, still watchful and still courteous. "I meant to report myself to-day, Mr. Querle, at your offices, but I found them closed to the public. Then I came on here to see my brother, who happened to be at home." There was the glint of battle in his eye; it overspread the Viking strength of him where he loomed with his back to the wall, his hand in his pocket.

Querle, a middle-sized, thick-set man, did not like the look of things. He thought a moment.

"You have come to claim the legacy? Rather risky to have left it so late. Anything might have held you up."

"I only heard of it recently," remarked Peter, still with his air of deadly courtesy. "Better late than never, Mr. Querle."

The lawyer nodded. His brain was beginning to recover from the shock. "Most fortunate for you," he said. "Ten thousand pounds are not to be despised."

"I, at all events, want them badly," commented Peter.

Querle leaned nearer. "I should like to know——" he began. But Peter held up his hand.

"When my brother returns, I will talk matters over." He spoke with an air of quiet authority. "He will not be long, I imagine, as he found you were not at the club."

"Did he tell you he was coming to see me?"

"No, I guessed." Peter's face was imperturbable. "You are close friends, aren't you? I fancy you must have a good deal in common."

Querle made no reply. He wondered if Peter were as easy-going as he looked. There was that in his eyes which suggested the reverse. The lawyer's hand went out towards the decanter.

Peter watched him, and made no movement.

There came the sound of footsteps outside, and Ramsay entered. He stopped short at the sight of the lawyer.

"Mr. Querle kindly unlocked the door," said Peter.

Ramsay drew nearer, taking off his gloves. He flung his hat upon a table, and sent a

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Chelsea group crashing to the ground. There was an ugly look on his face as he glanced from one to the other.

Peter, his back still to the wall, moved nearer the door. Ramsay took up his position on the rug; Querle, the glass untouched beside him, sat huddled up in his chair. The eyes of both were upon Peter. The latter spoke first

"I gathered, from my conversation with Mr. Querle on the 'phone, that there promises to be some difficulty over the legacy."

Ramsay gave a short laugh.

"A difficulty, eh? What do you say, Querle?"

The lawyer made no sign; his eyes never left Peter's face.

"On Monday morning, with witnesses, I hope to report myself at your office, Mr. Querle, and there I expect arrangements to be made for the cheque to be paid to me without unnecessary delay."

Again Ramsay laughed.

Querle sat erect in sudden desperation. His hands were shaking. He pulled at his collar as if it were too tight.

"It's better to be quite open and above-board," he said. "The money will not be forthcoming, Mr. Armadale. It has already been anticipated. You see"—his glance went to Ramsay—"there was so little likelihood of your return that—that——"

Peter made a step forward. "You have paid it out—have appropriated trust funds—in plainer words, stolen my legacy and shared it between you!" He looked round the luxurious room, comparing it with the surroundings to which he had lately been accustomed. His thoughts went to Miranda and her savings, so generously given. He saw himself swindled out of the ability to return it—saw himself stranded, unable to get back to her. Everything went red for a moment. Then he put his fingers towards the door-handle.

Ramsay made a spring forward.

"You fool!" he said, turning on the lawyer. "Don't let him go! He means to expose us. It's ruin, I tell you! *Don't let him go!*"

But Querle made no movement. He had seen a shining barrel emerge from Peter's pocket.

The latter turned, and Ramsay, his hand outstretched, fell back. "I give you till Monday"—Peter restrained himself with difficulty—"and if that cheque isn't forthcoming soon, I'll expose you both, as certain as there's justice in Heaven! That money's got to be found, I tell you, or it's penal servitude for you both!"

He opened the door very quietly and went out, adopting Ramsay's plan of turning the key in the lock. It would give him time to get away unfollowed. After all, they were desperate men.

* * * * *

Peter did not go to any of the music-halls that night. The future hung in the balance. He must hoard the remainder of Miranda's loan. He remembered that a butler of his father's had a house in a street off Piccadilly, where he let rooms. Brownlow would put him up, and in addition go with him to the solicitor's on Monday to bear witness to his return.

* * * * *

Miranda Orpington was at home again. She and her father had dined alone together, and now she had a few spare moments before going out to a dance. In all her soft, rose-pink finery, she sat on the arm of his chair while he smoked his after-dinner cigar.

John Orpington's eyes wore a puzzled look. He put up his big, capable hand to one of hers dangling over his shoulder.

"Seems to me, Miranda, your stay with Uncle William did you no good. There's a change come over you. You're quiet as a mouse. Don't appear to have the vim you used over social doings. Seldom hear that laugh o' yours. Seem kind o' sedate and thoughtful."

Miranda laughed softly now, her cheek against the top of his head.

"Why, for one thing, I'm six months older."

"Sorry you went to Uncle William's, honey?"

"Sorry? Why, no!" Her voice held a note he could not fathom. "I'm glad I went—*glad!*" She stood up and moved away a little, taking up her long gloves, and not meeting his eyes. He shook his head in a puzzled way, feeling helpless, as most men do when it comes to a comprehension of their feminine belongings.

The door opened, and a servant handed a card to Miranda.

Orpington, still watching her, saw a sudden glory dawn in her face. As the servant went out of the room again, Miranda held towards him the card.

"Someone I met at Uncle William's," she said breathlessly. "I think you'll like him, father."

"H'm!" Orpington began to see daylight. "Who is he, anyhow?" He fumbled

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for his glasses and surveyed the card. "Peter Crowley Armadale! Met him at Uncle William's, eh? You never told me a single word about him, Miranda."

But Miranda had flown away through the hall, and into the room where Peter, his eyes on the door, stood waiting for her.

Neither quite knew how it happened, but without a word, and long before either had time to see the difference in the other, she was in his arms, held very close to his heart. They never saw John Orpington looking through the half-open door. He stole away, drawing it to again.

"Guess I'm one too many," he said, a queer pang passing through him. "So that's what's been amiss. Seems a sizeable chap, anyhow, and if Miranda's bent on having him—well, I wager my bottom dollar she'll have him! Miranda's got more sense in choosing a husband than some."

* * * * *

"I went to Uncle William's," said Peter presently, "and they said you were living in New York. The place didn't look the same without you, Miranda, though your aunt is up and about again. She hasn't your way in the house. Do you remember the red frock, Miranda?" He held her from him to look at the rose-pink chiffon she wore. "Lovely as this is, the other's not to be beaten."

"I've got it still," said Miranda, with an unsteady little laugh. "I wore it, and wore it because of you, Peter, until it was almost threadbare."

"And do you remember how I talked of your savings"—Peter smiled down at her—"when all the time you were evidently a little impostor?"

"I don't save much nowadays," said Miranda.

"I'd hard enough work to get my dues out of them," went on Peter, "and it took me months instead of days. I believe I'd hardly have fought so long if it hadn't been for returning your savings, Miranda, and for coming back to you. Anyhow, they raised the legacy somehow between them, and here's your hundred dollars." He held her close with one hand, while with the other he drew out his pocket-book. "Open it, Miranda; you'll find your loan in a few nice, clean dollar bills. Count them."

Miranda counted them gravely, her head against his shoulder.

"And now," said Peter presently, "there's the question of interest. That's got to be fixed."

Miranda shook her head. Peter, in his well-cut evening clothes, looked so handsome and distinguished that she had no thought for dollars.

Peter's disappointed tone brought her from her reverie. "You said, if I'd take your savings, you would take interest as high as I liked to offer."

"That was only to persuade you." Miranda smiled. "You wouldn't have taken the savings if I hadn't said that. What does interest matter?"

"It matters a lot to me." Peter framed her face in big, tender hands, his own face eloquent. "For your sake, Miranda, I wish I were a duke with a rent-roll of a million a year"—his eyes left her to look around at the beautiful room, and then came back to her own perfection—"instead of a working farmer with a moderate capital. The interest I offer isn't nearly as high as it ought to be, Miranda—only the best part of fifty thousand dollars, and Peter Crowley Armadale thrown in."

Miranda laughed softly, then raised herself on tiptoe and put her arms round his neck.

"Guess I like the farmer best," she said, "especially when he happens to be you, Peter."

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WITH HIS BACK TO THE WALL.

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS,

Author of "Kings in Exile," "Neighbours Unknown," "More Kindred of the Wild," etc.

IT was a savage winter, the cruellest he had ever known; and, for a bear, he had known a good many. It had begun early, with frosts that bit to the bone, and cracked the trees surprised with too much sap yet in their branches, and sealed away the moist earth, with its grubs and roots and tubers, under an armour-plating of steel. Then had come storm on storm, with no assuaging of the frost, with hard, dry snow like white sand, which drove blindingly and would not pack, and gathered so deep that even the long-legged, snow-shoe-hoofed moose floundered in it belly deep. Even the depths of the ancient fir forests afforded scant shelter from the fury of the blizzards, whose cold ate its way to the heart of the densest thickets and froze the starving wild-cats in their lairs.

In his amiable and comfortable youth, the great black bear had been wont to keep in mind his mother's lesson, and "hole up" for the winter. Well stuffed with blue-berries and other autumn fruits, with honey, and starchy roots, and all the plump and teeming small fry of late summer, his store of fat had always made him grow drowsy at the approach of the cold, and, in some deep hollow under rock or pine-root, he had curled up to sleep and let the great snows cover him away till spring. But growing restless and morose with age, and more addicted to flesh food than to the bloodless diet of his youth, he had lost the happy knack of hibernating. While the females and the sleek young males of his kindred were sleeping away the bitter, inimical months of storm, he was roaming the desolation restlessly, wide awake with hunger, hunting with all his craft, and capturing barely enough of the long-legged rabbits to keep an ounce of flesh on his gaunt flanks.

About mid-February, when all the predatory beasts native to the range—bears, lynxes, foxes, fishers, and sables—were already in the grip of famine, there came a rush of ravenous new claimants upon the game. Sweeping down out of the north in packs came the great grey timber wolves, which for the last half-century had been no more than a tradition in this corner of the world. Since his cubhood the old black bear had never known what it was to be afraid; but now, when he heard that wailing and terrible pack-cry quavering over the snow, under the still moon, his heart quailed. And when, chancing upon the trail of one of the packs, he noted the number of the alien footprints, the hair rose stiffly along his neck with dread and fierce aversion. He felt that he could handle half a dozen at a time of these pale-eyed, ravaging intruders, and therefore he concluded that they would hardly presume to seek a quarrel with himself. But he decided that it would be prudent for him to avoid crossing their trail.

The chosen resort of the bear was a spacious stretch of the fir forest, where the dense coverts favoured his stalking and afforded some poor shelter from the wind. But one day, in savage disgust over the scarcity of anything to stalk, he started out across a reach of barrens to try his luck in the broken country of mixed woods along the fringe of the uplands. The barrens were flat and open, but dotted with innumerable clumps of bush growth, wherein he felt that he might find grouse squatting, or big snow-shoe rabbits nibbling at the poplar twigs. Far across the open he could make out a black upthrust of rock, with a tumble of boulders trailing off to one side, and toward this he directed his course, with the idea that its recesses might hold some likely den, more impervious to the wind than his fir thickets. If the den should prove to be already occupied, so much the better. That would mean for him a lair and a stocked larder, all in one.

Out across the grey-white levels, under the low arch of blank, whitish sky, he laboured slowly, his black bulk sharply conspicuous as he went. The plains, in their savage, white desolation, had the suggestion

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of naked granite, their scattered and half-buried thickets showing here and there thin lines and blotches and tips of dark grey. A wide-winged white hawk-owl, swooping low over the drift-wrinkles, followed the trail of a weasel which was itself hungrily trailing a panic-stricken mouse. Hunger, desperation, and the implacable cold possessed the scene.

For some little time, as he moved across the emptiness, the bear had been vaguely conscious of a far-off, wavering pack-cry in his ears. Intent upon his own needs, he had paid no attention to it, beyond vaguely but angrily envying the hunters the quarry that they hunted—a caribou, perhaps, or a giant bull-moose, which would give them a long chase, indeed, but a satisfying meal at the end of it. He plodded on, his hungry eyes searching the snow. At last he came upon the fresh tracks of a rabbit, leading toward a deeply-buried thicket some hundred yards to the right. His faculties sharpened to their utmost, he crouched flat till he was almost out of sight in the deep snow, and began to worm his way noiselessly along the trail. It was amazing how small and inconspicuous he managed to make himself.

But now, his faculties being all at once so keenly awake, he became conscious of an unusual note in that many-throated cry far behind him. It was not quite the same as when the pack followed easy quarry. There was a ring of hate in it, a deadly challenge and defiance. Moreover, it was nearer at hand; it was undoubtedly approaching.

Suddenly the bear stood up straight in his tracks, and with a low growl stared behind him. His heart gave a bound of rage, and then for an instant stood still. It was he himself, this time, that was the quarry.

For several seconds, being a fighter to the last claw, he contemplated holding his ground and giving battle where he was to the insolent invaders of his range. He even glanced around at the thicket wherein the rabbit lay hidden, thinking, perhaps, to capture it and ease his hunger before the wailing pack should come up. But just then he caught sight of the pack emerging from the edge of the fir forest and sweeping down along his trail without an instant's hesitation. What a horde they were! The sight decided him. He would be surrounded, and would have no chance to put up a fight. He turned once more and started at a long, rolling gallop for that upthrust of rock. If he could reach it, he could there find some vantage ground and fight a less uneven battle.

In spite of his bulk and his look of heaviness, the bear's pace was swift. His great strength enabled him to overcome, for a time, the cumbering softness of the snow, which, indeed, hampered his pursuers as sorely as himself. Gaunt and hard, his wind was good, and his will to gain the rock was invincible. The pack, running now in a grim silence that was more menacing even than their marrow-chilling chorus, came up rapidly, but the start of the fugitive had been sufficient. They were within two score paces of him when he reached the rock.

The face of the rock at this point was perpendicular and absolutely smooth. Even for the bear, an expert climber, there was no such thing as scaling it. But it gave him what he was looking for above all—the guarantee against being overwhelmed from behind. He wheeled like a flash, thrust his back against the rock, rose to a squatting posture of contained readiness, lifted both his armed fore-paws, and faced his pursuers in silence, with lips curled back from his yellow fangs, and his little deep-set eyes flaming blue-green.

The wolves, digging their fore-feet deep into the snow, brought up short at a distance of less than a dozen feet. This was a quarry such as they had never hunted before. They spread themselves out in a half-circle before him, some prowling restlessly back and forth, some sitting up on their haunches, but all keeping their dreadful eyes centred upon him. Their leader, a little to the front, stood considering; and the bear, swinging his great head slowly from side to side, waited.

II.

DREADFUL as was that winter to all the wild kindreds of the forest, to Job Thatch, the trapper, in his half-buried cabin behind the upthrust of rock, its menace, at the first, was of small concern. His cabin was snug, he had abundant firewood stacked about it, and he had "packed" in from the settlements a certain amount of flour, bacon, tea, and molasses, to supplement the fresh meat which his rifle could be counted on to provide him. The growing scarcity of game mattered less to him than to any other foragers of the wilderness, for none of the furred four-footed hunters could compare with him in efficiency at their own craft. In all but the sense of smell, he was a better hunting animal than the best of them. He could hear as well as the listening moose. He could see as far as the lynx, and with a

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more discriminating vision. On his snow-shoes he could run lightly and tirelessly when they floundered in the drifts, and with his rifle he could kill at such a distance that the wariest quarry whose trail he followed had no warning of his pursuit till the soft-nose bullet dropped it in its tracks. Recognising this supremacy, many of the lesser prowlers, in spite of their fear and hate of him, took to following him secretly that they might feast upon the remnants of his kills.

But the price of Job Thatch's confident efficiency was that he never thought to provide himself against ill-chance. He killed for fresh meat only as the need arose, and only such game as came his way while making the daily round of his wide-lying traps. And so, when the ill-chance befell him, laying him up a prisoner in his cabin, he had only the last scant half of a haunch of caribou and a brace of skinny rabbits in his primitive cold storage.

And this was the way in which the sombre powers of the wild, over which he had always imagined himself so securely master, turned suddenly upon him and smote him down. While running lightly over the snow along the edge of a gully, a buried sliver caught at his snow-shoe and threw him. With a twisting jerk, he went headlong down the petty steep. As he fell, a pang of horror and anguish went through him, and he heard the bone of his right leg go with a dull, sickening snap.

For a second or two it seemed to him that this was the end. He knew so well just what it meant, for he knew so well the implacable powers of the wild which had thus turned upon him and got him at so hopeless a disadvantage. The shooting anguish for a moment numbed his will, and it seemed to him best to lie where he was and let the deadly cold do its work as quickly as possible. With the temperature at the point where the mercury grows solid in the bulb, it would not be long before the anguish would pass softly and he would slip into the endless sleep.

Then his brain cleared, and the old mastery awoke in his will. The White Death which he had so long and confidently foiled should not fool him and finish him now. The furred prowlers whom he had hunted and trapped should not now come feasting upon his flesh and pulling his bones apart. By sheer resolve he sent the blood surging once more valiantly through his veins, and laughed out loud, hoarsely, at the anguish in his leg. Then he set himself to drag his way back to the cabin.

First, he had to go directly away from it, seeking the mouth of the ravine, whose steep sides he was quite unable to scale. His snow-shoes he used now on his hands instead of on his feet, beating himself down a track by which to worm his way slowly along. It was a battle, every inch, but his will was unfaltering, his wind like a wolf's, and his muscles as untiring as the corded sinews of a weasel. The frost sank down and closed in upon him in vain, for his struggle kept him in a glow, and the grind of the broken bone at every movement kept stabbing him to a fury of effort. And after seven hours of this gigantic wrestle against death, he gained the door of his cabin, lifted himself on the snow-shoes, as crutches, to pull the latch-string, and fell across the threshold.

Now, for a moment, having won, he stood to lose all. Drunk with exhaustion, he told himself he was safe, and was just falling asleep with the door half open. Had he done so, the fire would soon have died, the White Death would have crept in upon him where he lay, and afterwards would have come the prowlers to the unlooked-for feast. But something cried out a sharp warning in the depths of his brain, and he woke up. He shut the door, piled wood upon the coals in the stove, saw the fire well alight, closed the draught, and then slept for an hour on the floor. When he woke up, he brewed himself a kettle of strong tea, and felt that he was once more master of his fate.

His immediate fear was that, if the broken leg were not set, he would be for the rest of his life a cripple. It was little enough he knew about surgery, but the competent woodsman is nothing if not versatile. Summoning up to his aid every fragment of memory or knowledge or suggestion or hearsay on the subject of broken bones—and he found there were a good many such fragments scattered through his brain—he proceeded to make himself a set of rude splints from the bark and light wood which he kept for kindling his fire. Then, tying the foot of the broken leg solidly to one post of his bunk, he laid the splints and lashings loosely in place about it, and proceeded to pull the ends of the fracture into place. It took a huge effort. At the agony of it the sweat jumped out upon his grey-white forehead, and the breath hissed between his set teeth. At last, with a nauseating, muffled click, the ends came into place. With iron resolution

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he tightened the splints and lashed them so there could be no slipping. Then, for a little while, consciousness went from him.

For a week or two the prisoner had nothing more to trouble about than the fierce, shooting pains in his leg-bone, the slow laboriousness of wriggling himself about the cabin without disturbing the splints, and the deadly monotony of this still, restricted life when his veins throbbed with energy. He had all the time there was, and in his horror at the thought of going through life with a useless limb it seemed to him a small thing to occupy two hours in getting four sticks of wood into the stove.

But all the while he had to eat, and he found his appetite not greatly affected by his strenuous inactivity. When his tiny store of fresh meat was all gone, for a few days he fared well enough on his bacon and flour cakes. Then, with a shock that was almost panic, he realised that his supply of these was shrinking with dreadful rapidity.

Straightway he put himself on strictly limited rations. Then he calculated how many weeks he had provision for. His heart went chasing the thermometer into the depths as he realised that he had not more than enough to keep the life shivering in his body for a matter of three weeks and two or three days. He had no idea how long it would take his leg to get well, but he felt very sure that three weeks and three days would not suffice for the cure.

Here was the Silent Adversary at him again, and this time not with the rush and thrust of assault, but with the slow siege and implacable patience which he recognised as the more dangerous form of attack. He was not daunted, but he began to feel that he had his back to the wall.

It was happy for him that his supply of fuel was practically inexhaustible, for he now burned it recklessly, lying in the open doorway with his rifle till almost frozen, in the hope of some deer or caribou passing within range. After days of disappointment in this hope, he ventured to writhe himself forth into the snow, and with almost inconceivable labour set a few traps behind the cabin. But, for all his woodcraft, he was unable to quite cover his hopelessly unwieldy trail, and all the wild things, timely warned, made a mock of such futile snares. One rabbit only was his catch in two weeks' trapping, and that he was barely in time to save from the jaws of a hungry wolverine.

Presently it was borne in upon him that there was a special reason, outside the severity of the winter, for this unwonted scarcity of game. Understanding came to him when there was borne to his ears, across the stupendous stillness of the moonlit night, that long, high, quavering chorus which he had not heard since the days when he did his trapping on the Mackenzie. "Timber wolves!" he muttered. And, dragging himself laboriously to the window, he looked out in time to see the pack, running close and well-ordered, sweep by far out on the shining level.

After that he made up his mind that it was wolves he would lie in wait for in his doorway. If he could get a shot at one, and save the carcase from the rest of the pack, he would have something little to his taste, indeed, but sufficing to keep the life in his veins.

For several days after this resolve, nothing came within sight or sound of the cabin, not even a foraging hawk-owl; and with only three days' scant rations left on his shelves, Job Thatch began to tell himself it was time to take thought for the emergencies that might confront his spirit on the other side of Beyond. Casting up accounts with himself, he came to the conclusion that, as he had never funked in this life, it was not likely he would meet with anything that could make him funk in the next. He further decided that, as in this life he had always done his best to be square in his dealings with his fellow-men, that Unseen Power whom he had half-consciously recognised and reverenced would surely see to it that he got a square deal in the next. A square deal was all that he asked for, and he would rely upon himself to play his hand.

In the midst of these stoical but bracing reflections, he was aroused by the approaching clamour of the wolf-pack. Snatching his rifle, he dragged himself to the door.

There was nothing in sight. The wolves were behind the great rock. In a few seconds his trained ear told him that, though still far off, they were approaching on a course which would take them away along the broken ground to the right, and not *bring* them within range or even view of the cabin at all.

For a moment he hesitated. The baleful chorus told him that the pack was a very large one, and he himself, dragging a useless and encumbering leg, was hardly in shape to do battle. But his decision was prompt. Better die fighting than die freezing, in any case. He glanced at his rifle—a repeater—to see that the chamber was full,

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"Rose to a squatting posture of contained readiness."

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snatched up a belt of cartridges and his axe, and hitched his way eagerly around the shoulder of the rock to a point where he could view the situation.

He saw the huge, gaunt figure of the bear, a hundred yards away, straining toward the rock. He saw the ravening wolf-pack close behind. His first impulse was to shoot the bear instantly, bear's meat being good. But he knew that, if he did so, he would taste never a shred of that meat, for the wolves would have it out of sight in no time. He noted the numbers of the pack. He noted, far behind, another and larger pack racing up to claim a share of the spoil. He saw what a hopeless venture he had let himself into; and grimly resolving that the price of his life, in wolves, should be a stiff one, he hoisted himself into a niche where he could brace himself upright and have free play, at the last, for his axe.

As he did so, he saw the bear reach the rock, whip round, and grimly face the horde of his pursuers.

"Good for you, old pard!" muttered Thatch. "I'm right glad I didn't shoot!"

III.

FOR some moments the bear sat there on his haunches, eyeing his dreadful adversaries. They were precious moments to him, for they enabled him to recover his wind; but this the wolves, tireless of sinew and with lungs of leather, never thought of. There was no apparent consultation between them, nor, as far as either the bear or the watcher in the rocks could discern, did any communication pass between the leader and the rest of the pack. Yet all at once, as if on a given signal, the leader hurled himself forward, and the whole pack with him, in silence.

The leader was in front, but he was leader not by virtue of his superior stature and strength alone. His was the superior craft. He knew what must inevitably happen to the first in that encounter. At the last instant he swerved and sank downward. His nearest follower came to the front, and was met by a right-arm cuff from the bear which smashed his head clean back into his shoulders and hurled the lifeless mass clear out over the backs of the pack, where it was straightway seized and torn by those wolves which could not force their way into the fight.

Though the leader of the pack had evaded that fatal stroke, he was no shirker; the leader of a wolf-pack cannot afford to be. At the instant when the stroke was delivered, he sprang in under the bear's uplifted paw and slashed the tender, exposed flank murderously. With his tremendous length and strength of jaw, it was a savage wound. But the audacity of it was promptly punished. Before he could spring back, his adversary's left descended upon him—a quick, chopping blow with all claws outstretched—and, with a shattered spine, he dropped beneath the feet of his fellows.

As he disappeared, the black bulk of the bear himself also disappeared, literally overflooded by the wave of wolves. But the next instant the wave heaved, broke, and rolled back. Several wolves, with feet in air and bowed backs like puppies, were hurled flying as if from an explosion, and the bear re-emerged, his eyes blazing, his jaws and shoulders streaming with blood not all his own.

"Bully fer you, pardner!" yelled Thatch, forgetting everything in his excitement over so fine a fight.

This enthusiastic encouragement was apparently lost on the bear, whose whole attention was now occupied in beating back, with lightning strokes, the returning surge of his assailants. But the wolves heard it—the more or less unoccupied prowlers on the fringe of the battle. The narrow green flames of their eyes all turned upon the figure of the man who had shouted. Then they launched themselves upon him, to the number of perhaps twenty. Job Thatch did not take time to count them accurately, for he noted that the second pack was arriving upon the scene.

The rifle began to speak, almost as fast as he could pull the trigger, and the foremost wolves went down. Most of the others, too ravenous to think of anything but the mad craving in their bellies, stopped to feast on the meat thus provided for them, but three kept straight on. One of these was fairly blown from the muzzle of Thatch's gun, but the other two were upon him before he could get them covered. One he dashed aside from the butt with a smashed foreshoulder, but the other seized him by the leg. It was the broken leg, and Job Thatch laughed, for those terrible fangs wasted their fury on the splints. His axe struck sideways. A fountain of scarlet followed it, and the wolf fell backward writhing into the hideous scuffle below.

Palpitating from his triumph, Thatch looked across to see how the bear was faring. The battle still went on. Still rose the black but bloodied head, dauntless and furious,

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over the snapping pack, still thrashed the mighty flails of those ponderous fore-arms. But the new-comers were now sweeping up to the reinforcement of their discouraged kin, and Thatch saw that the fierce old fighter would soon be downed. Snatching up his rifle again, he hurriedly refilled the chamber, and began pumping lead into the new arrivals, the foremost of whom had already halted to devour their wounded kin.

The effect was almost immediate, as far as the bear was concerned. His most pressing assailants, already wavering, were daunted by the sounds of the rifle-shots, and drew off sullenly, lingering, as they went, to tear a mouthful or two from a dying comrade. The bear, suddenly realising himself victorious, clutched the last of his retiring assailants in a death-grip and fell to biting at him with mingled rage and hunger.

The new arrivals, utterly engrossed in assuaging their famine, did not seem to notice for a few minutes how death was being dealt among them. But, as their pangs ceased to torment them, they once more became alive to other considerations. One, just nicked by a bullet, yelped and bit at the wound. Then on a sudden all the survivors seemed to take note together of the fact that their fellows were dropping about them, some to instant stillness, some into kicking and writhing paroxysms. Their ears turned towards the shattering rifle-shots; their eyes all stared with sudden fear at the figure of the man erect in his niche. Then their grey, feathered tails curled down between their haunches, they ran quickly together as if herded by a threatening voice, and all swept off along the base of the broken ground, not pausing to look back.

The bear, the fiercest pangs of his hunger satisfied, lifted his gaunt and bleeding head and stared defiantly at Job Thatch. If this was another enemy—well, he was ready for another fight. Thatch slowly lifted his rifle.

"Bear meat's a sight better eatin' than wolf," he muttered.

Then he lowered the weapon again.

"No, old pardner," he continued, speaking aloud and directly towards the doubtful-looking beast, "that would be a low-down trick to play on ye, seein' as how we've fought shoulder to shoulder, so to speak. An' a right slick fight ye've put up! Here's my best wishes, an' may ye keep clear of my traps!"

The bear, as if uneasy at the sound of the human voice, moved off slowly, dragging one of the dead wolves, and looking for a retreat in the rocks where he could be out of range of the man's disquieting eye. Then Thatch came down from his post of vantage. He picked out three of the youngest and least skinny of the carcases, tied them together by the legs, and started laboriously to drag them to the cabin, planning to come back for more after he had set a dinner on to boil. He felt a little ashamed of his weakness in having let the bear go free, but, after some consideration, he managed to justify himself.

"That bear was nawthin' but a bag o' bones," he murmured. "He was old an' *tough*, an' what there was of him would 'ave been mighty rank eatin'. But young wolf, well boiled, can't be no worse'n dawg!"

He hitched himself slowly into the cabin with his trophies, his grim face aglow with triumph. In his vague but mystical imagination he could perceive the vast, silent, unseen powers of the wild, which had so treacherously conspired against him, drawing back in grave defeat.

AMBITION.

IN fervent youth light seems the task,
To sweep the stars down from the sky;
In older age we humbly ask
To sweep the stairs—at least, to try.

S. MACNAUGHTAN.

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THE RAGGED EDGE.

By KATE JORDAN,

Author of "Time, the Comedian," etc.

THE sudden squall drove Celia against the houses, and lashed her at last into the Restaurant Les Deux Magots. It seemed the wildest rain she had ever known. And then came the iron thought—to be houseless, with one's last franc in one's pocket, and to be a woman, on such a night!

She found a seat at an inconspicuous table. The crowd was all before her. Heads moved like an undertow beneath a sea of smoke; names were shouted across the room; corks popped; coffee ran in smoking cascades from the waitresses' big metal pots. The well-being of feeding animals mixed with the joyous uproar of dreaming, reckless youth. While Celia's franc lasted, she could be a part of it, but—after that? She put her hands to her eyes and ground in the fingers. Again, as for several days past, she saw a picture of the Seine flowing serenely, a white face, like a rootless lily, upon its tide.

"Are you sick, Miss Emery?" Yvonne, the waitress, was bending over her.

Celia's numbed hands dropped. "Just hungry, Yvonne," she said, with woman's eternal smile, that floats like a curtain between her distress and the world.

"We have to-night," said Yvonne, as if sharing a confidence, "some rabbit stew with thick wine-sauce, of an excellence to astonish."

But Celia ordered only soup and bread, and Yvonne went away on her heavy Gascon feet, while her glowing Gascon fancy understood, and exclaimed: "*La pauvre!* Ah, she is like a broken, blue-grey moth that the flame will surely swallow!"

The crowd, that at first was as blurred by smoke as a spoiled wash drawing, began to disclose individual vignettes to Celia. She saw that one table held a quartette of young men in costume—a Spanish postillion in black velvet and scarlet, a hairy cave man in skins, an Assyrian king, high-crowned, with stiffly-ringleted hair and beard, and a young Cæsar in a white wool toga, a pale blue velvet cloak piled on one shoulder, and a wreath of silver bays pressed down low around his dark, close-cropped head.

"The Quat'z Arts Ball is to-night, of course," Celia thought without enthusiasm. She had forgotten it. Last spring she had been one of a happy party that had dined in a restaurant close to the Moulin Rouge, where it was held, and from that vantage point had seen the painters and their models, representing creatures of every century and clime, flock in to hold the wildest revel of the none too sedate revels of the year.

She was not conscious of her dull, uninterested stare at the men until she saw the Cæsar fling up his heavily-braceleted arm and wave to her. Then she knew him. He had been only a few months in the Quarter, modelling under a famous sculptor. She had never chanced to meet him at the infrequent studio teas and suppers she had attended, but had passed him often, and had known every time that, in the freemasonry of the life, he would have spoken to her if she had not always looked at him so soberly, and then beyond him—oh, quite, *quite* beyond him—to the farthest speck of sky, to the very end of the longest street.

She looked at him just as soberly now, but to-night he was not in a mood to mind it. He laughed a great deal. He kept brushing up the silver leaves from his brows with a hand that was fiery with paste jewels. Once he sang two whole lines of "*Tout en Rose*," before the cave man hit him with a huge bone that he used as a baton.

Celia was used to scenes like this. She knew that strewn over the world were mature, grave, successful artists who, years before, had frolicked in Paris in the same mad way. Yet somehow the young Cæsar saddened her. Perhaps she was seeing life clearer to-night because—so close to the abyss—she was *looking back upon it*. She did not know. But the boy—he was not more than twenty-five or six—seemed to her

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like a brilliant kite fluttering through the air, but with sure soilure awaiting it on some gutter's edge.

The revellers began to make preparations for leaving. The clock was striking nine as Cæsar stood up. Through the bluish fog his eyes held Celia's. Dark, very dark eyes they were, wide-open, boyish, with the dream of life burning in them—beautiful eyes. He began to sing "*Tout en Rose*" again, still watching her—

". . . . *Allez-y! Aimez-vous!*
Tout simplement."

The besottedly happy refrain was taken up at other tables as he poured out a last glass of champagne, and, while singing, covertly raised it to her. But it remained in the air. He looked at her, dazed. Celia, sitting with clasped hands and tightly-shut, pale lips, had shaken her head at him. He frowned, and, after a pause, brusquely edged the glass to his lips. She shook her head again very slowly. Her eyes were grieved, and they admonished, appealed. He shivered his big shoulders and put the glass down, but contemptuously, the action as plain as speech: "There, you little Puritan! You're stupid and irritating, but I hope you're satisfied."

Yvonne brought the soup, and Celia did not look Cæsar's way again. But she was nevertheless aware that he tramped out singing defiantly—

". . . . *Allez-y! Aimez-vous!*
Tout simplement."

II.

CELIA'S eyes sprang open, and a long, dreary, astonished shiver followed. Just before her she saw a row of striped, awning scallops, and beyond them a stretch of lonely, pool-bright streets and angles of starry, violet sky. Remembrance came back to her. When she had heard that the sensational April hurricane was over, and had seen Yvonne shuffling the dry chairs to their places under the awning, she had settled into this corner seat outside and had fallen asleep. The hushed, unpeopled streets, smelling of rain, *felt* late.

She was not as panic-stricken as she had been earlier. The stimulus of the hot soup had swept her to decision regarding an act that had heretofore been considered in a pale, futile way and with distinct distaste. She had decided that, after managing to pass the night without the shelter of a roof, she could buy her breakfast and still have enough for 'bus fare to the American Consul's. In the uplift of the moment she had imaged him a big-hearted Samaritan, who, while helping her, would say beautiful things of the bond between them formed by the Stars and Stripes. She did not feel so sure of the Stars and Stripes now. Still, he would do something. The important thing was to live safely through the night in the streets, and the dawn would mean hot coffee, new courage, and new hope.

She was alone outside the restaurant, except for an old man. He was Le Galle, the shoemaker of the neighbourhood, a tippler who was commanded by a dramatically shrewish wife.

"She'll come soon and drag him home squealing," Celia found herself musing aimlessly. She yawned in a chilly way. Her eyes would have closed again, but an old *fiacre* came with a dislocating lurch around the corner and stopped short. No one came out it. The *cocher*, in glistening yellow oilskin, threw a blanket over the thin, steaming horse, and sat down as far as possible from herself and old Le Galle.

Yvonne, whisking about the place, had noticed Celia. Every other time the blue-grey moth had fluttered away after meals as if frightened.

"*La pauvre!*" she thought, and crossed to her. "You are going to see some fun," she whispered hilariously. "Le Galle's wife has asked me to put a sleeping powder in his third brandy—a strong one, on my word!—so she can drag him home in peace. *Attendez!*" She took Le Galle's order, the *cocher's* order, winked at Celia, and disappeared.

The shoemaker was already moistening his puckered, purplish lips in semi-inebriation. The *cocher* had hung the big glazed coat over a chair beside him, and sat with his hands over his face, tired out.

Yvonne swung out with two glasses of cognac on her tray. She gave one into Le Galle's clutching fingers, and placed the other beside the *cocher*, touching his arm for payment: "*Alors, monsieur!*" He gave the pennies, drank the brandy at one rapacious gulp, and sat forward as before, his face within his shielding hands. Yvonne made a triumphant, mischievous grimace at Le Galle, and went into the restaurant. Celia sat on in a dolorous silence. Her face, like a grey mask, stared at vacancy.

Five minutes had trailed by without anything happening, when a taxicab began to murmur far away. Louder—*louder!* Now it came as fast as a train down the empty street, and stopped in a climax of cluckings before Les Deux Magots.

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"*Attendez!*" a resounding, genial voice called. There was a splash of white, azure, and twinkling silver, and the young Cæsar stepped under the awning. The draperies were a hindrance to his lurching college stride, and he visibly missed the pockets into which he would have thrust his hands. He was whistling, and had given the victor's wreath a push over one eye, so that, in some grotesque way, it suggested a travelling cap.

After one look at him, Celia had turned her head sharply away. There was a singularly poignant shame in having this man see her—this strange young man, of all others. Why she should feel so in regard to him she could not tell, but it was a dread that scorched her as she sat with her face twisted over her shoulder.

"*Hel-lo!*" she heard him mutter in dismay. He paused, swung about, and crossed to her. She could hear the little table before her creak under his weight as he spread both big, jewelled hands upon it.

"I've been thinking about you all night." It was a flat declaration of friendship addressed to all he could see of her face—the curve of small, pointed chin, and long, quivering eyelashes. "You were bully to warn me against drinking, although I guess you thought me pretty fresh. Excuse me, won't you, please?" he asked very winningly, and waited. Her head sank lower. "Now, look here, Miss Emery!" A pleased look went over his face as he noticed her shoulders twitch when he spoke her name. He sat down with a venomous vigour. "Don't try to freeze me for a masher—I'm not! I told you I kept thinking of you to-night. That was because I was worried about you. I hadn't seen you lately, and, honestly, I was staggered at the change in you. I could have kicked myself afterwards for leaving here without speaking to you. We were headed for some Montmartre *cafés* to kill three or four hours till the ball began. But I gave up the idea of going to it. I shook the crowd and came back. I meant to find out from Madame where you lived and what she knew about you. And now"—he came to an inconclusive ending—"now you're here—*still*. I know you're sick, or in some trouble, or both."

Celia, stubbornly proud, and shy as a wild bird, looked flickeringly into his eyes and then past him. "Thank you; you're very kind. But you are mistaken about me; there's nothing wrong at all."

They sat in awkward silence for a moment. Her throat was contracting. His kind, candid words, his voice with *home* in it, had pierced her. Inside of her she was sobbing hard.

"I don't want to make a nuisance of myself, but don't you think you'd better let me take you home?" When she slowly shook her head, he looked at her as an anxious St. Bernard might look at a disobedient puppy. "All right, then. But it seems to me——" He stood up, lingered, and said "Good night!" in a defeated tone.

It was just then that the *cocher's* head came down with a bang on his arms to the crash of broken glass; that Le Galle, with a squeal of surprise at the sight, began knocking on the table; that Yvonne appeared, and, after a horrified glance at the *cocher*, said to Celia in an aside: "*Mon Dieu*, I gave *him* the drug!" that Celia, now on her feet, gave a shrill, sliding laugh as she swayed; that the young Cæsar clutched her and, as her wild laughter turned to tears, made her sit down, while, kneeling beside her, he patted her shoulders, gave her water, comforted her, and even straightened her hat, that had a way of coming down over her small, teary nose.

"You see," he said victoriously, when she was calm, "I've just *got* to take care of you. No more marble heart—we're friends."

Le Galle and Yvonne had disappeared. Except for the stupefied *cocher*, Celia and the young Cæsar were alone under the awning. She did not wish to send him away now; she had had enough of proud loneliness and secret panic. Without knowing it, her hand had fastened upon his as if it were to pull her up out of something. Meanwhile, he was kneeling on the wet stones, rubbing hard with helpful intention at the clinging hand.

"You'll get that—that lovely toga ruined." The irresistible feminine warning came sniffingly.

"Oh, hang the toga! I feel like a woman in it, anyway."

He stood up, however, and took a chair opposite her, but very close, as if he would shut off from her the dampness and the cold. How often he had speculated on the baffling colour of her eyes! Sea-green, they had sometimes seemed, then sometimes violet-black. Now he *knew*. Those large, soft, shining eyes were just the shade of his old moleskin cap that he loved—the same rich, slate-grey under a bluish haze.

"What's the matter?" he asked, in the kindest way. "Up against it, isn't that it?"

Yes, that was it. She had not had much money when she had come from Virginia to

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Paris to study painting, but had hoped to support herself by sketches, illustrations, etc. The first year she had pulled through. The second had brought her to grief. That day she had been locked out of her top floor studio, three months' rent owing for it. Her two chums happened to be out of Paris at this time. One had sublet her studio, and had gone to America for a while; the other was sketching in the château country—she did not know where.

"I have acquaintances, of course," she said, with a weak attempt at pride, "and I'm sure—oh, *quite* sure—that they'd have found a corner for me to-night. But I couldn't go and ask them. I tried, but I couldn't." She began nervously to twist her hands. "I've told you, and—that's all."

"Quite enough," said Cæsar. His eyes were like a dove's with pity, but he stood up in a business-like way and spoke as a lawyer to a client. "You're to go back to your studio, right away. If there isn't a fire, we'll make the old hyena who locked you out get one——"

She had been studying him with a groping look. "But I have no money."

"*I have.*"

"I—I couldn't do that." She shivered and stood up.

"Why not, I'd like to know?"

"Oh, your coming upon me this way, and I don't *really* know you," she said, her eyes miserable and frightened.

He bent over her frowningly. "I'm an American. My name is Lowden—Philip Jeralomen Lowden. There's no reason——"

"I'd rather not," she pleaded. "Somehow I——"

"Rotten conventionality!" said Cæsar, and doubled his fists. "Don't you suppose I know the kind of girl you are?"

"I'm sure you understand," she said faintly, hopelessly, but finally, "yet——"

They stood silent then, side by side, looking out at the still, phantasmal streets.

"Well, let's go somewhere, get something to eat, and talk this thing over comfortably. That'll kill part of the night, anyway. This place closes at one—it's almost that—but I know a better one. Here's my taxi." He gazed down at her in sudden anxiety. "Your coat's like paper. I wonder if Madame or Yvonne hasn't a cloak?"

Celia's eyes strayed to the sleeping *cocher* and the oilskin raincoat over the chair. She gave a wan, ironic smile. "If I could only borrow his," she said jestingly, "without any explanation or fuss!"

"You *can!* Good idea! Hold on!"

He pulled a wallet from under the pale blue velvet over his breast, and hurried to the *cocher*. Celia, amazed, saw him crush some paper money into the man's loosely-folded fist. In a few long strides he was at her side again, and buttoning her into the coat.

"Dandy! Things are looking up. This is brand-new, and as warm as a blanket," he cried briskly. "I gave him enough to buy three like it, so he can't kick."

"Aren't you cold, too?" she asked wistfully, as he handed her into the cab, and he was reminded of the first appearance of trust in a watchful, eyeing robin.

"No, I'm a fake," he confided, grinning—"a light and airy Roman swell in the style of 10 A.D., on the outside, but underneath I'm a study in lamb's-wool."

As she snuggled down in the raincoat, that held her like a huge cornucopia, she heard him rousing the chauffeur. "Wake up! Wake up! No tired business men here, *I* tell you! Gaston—Gustave! No, I'm *not* Geneviève. Go to the Restaurant du Filet-de-Sole—yes, Boulevard Montmartre—and *vite*, my friend—*vite, vite!*"

He gathered up his skirts, stepped in, shut the door with a bang, and settled down joyously beside her. "This is bully," he said, and began to sing: "*Allez-y! Aimez-vous!*" But he got no farther.

It was exactly as if a weird intelligence had stepped into the cab with him. There was a sultry prediction in the air. He was so big that, as he sat down, he had felt for half a moment the line of her fragile body along his own, before she drew away silently into her corner. He became as silent. The cab flew through strange, eerie streets, where lines of dark houses faced each other with electric lights flickering lonesomely between them. They sat in shadow, sometimes in absolute darkness. They seemed sealed in a hollow cube and flung into space, they two alone.

"Are you warmer?" Philip asked, after a long silence, and turned to look fully at her. It seemed a daring thing to do with this new, throbbing consciousness back of the look.

"Oh, yes!" She met his gaze. Her voice had a catch in it. Their eyes were brilliant in the gloom. He could feel her tremble. His own heart was hammering in a stifling way. He looked out at the streets—it seemed wiser. He tried to sing. He tried to ask if he might smoke. But he did neither. He sat with his arms folded fiercely, and let

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the voice that had entered the cab with him whisper of something too vague even to be a dream, but that had a penetrating, ghostly delight. Celia was silent, and he heard her breath flutter. She, too, looked out at the streets through her window. But, as if she had confessed, he knew that she was spell-wrapped as he was—wondering, quivering, troubled as he was.

III.

THE Restaurant du Filet-de-Sole was commercial and journalistic. A staff of waiters, looking neat and rested, had just come on at midnight. Everything about the brightly-lighted, sanded oblong was as fresh as the pyramid of crisp, wet radishes that gave a rosiness to the *hors d'œuvres* table in the centre.

When Celia and her pilot entered, some of the men sang out a greeting to him, and glanced at her, but briefly. Philip, looking as if he had stepped from the pages of Gibbon's "Roman Empire," and Celia, with tousled hair, excited face, a *cocher's* raincoat enclosing her like a big bag, were allowed to sit in perfect peace among the cloth and corduroy of the others—*it was the night of the Quat'z Arts Ball.* Besides, nothing astonishes Paris.

"I'd better circulate among these fellows," Philip said, after ordering an *omelette aux herbes* and a pitcher of chocolate. "I know half a dozen at that big table—two of them are Secret Service men. They're friendly souls, so I'd better explain you, or they'll come visiting. You're my cousin from the States, and I am indulging your eccentric American desire to see the night side of the city."

Left alone, Celia felt a hush surround her, disturbed at times by terrifying little shoots of joy. She was only twenty-four. She had never been a really happy girl, for at home there had always been poverty and care, and the last six months in Paris had been a desperate tussle with the gruesomely patient wolf that has a way of sitting on certain frayed doormats. The romance and lawlessness of her position to-night penetrated her dull despair. She loved this vagabond hour. In her shy heart she was ashamed of loving it so much—it was so wide of the demure foot-rule with which she had always measured her conduct. Yet she did rejoice in it, though with hopelessness quivering through the feeling, for she looked beyond it, and saw herself far away from her dear Paris—this night—and *him*—a memory.

Philip came back as the big omelette was being placed on the table. As he sat down, the voices back of him rose to such a sudden frenzy of discussion that Celia gave an alarmed look over her shoulder.

"They're not throwing things at each other," Philip said assuringly; "they're merely emphatic after the manner of the Gaul. Listen—there's a big, diplomatic sensation to-night, but it's to be kept very quiet—not a word is to get into the papers. A memorandum that was arranged by two big statesmen, French and English, in all probability establishing the *entente cordiale* between their countries, bearing upon Germany's attitude to England, *has been stolen.* This paper's existence was to have been kept a secret from every national bureau of foreign affairs, excepting Russia, no doubt, who is the definite ally of France, and is in agreement with England as to Persia and the Balkans. You understand?" he asked, only pausing in the story to answer the smiling helplessness in her eyes.

"I'm stupid about politics. I only know that something's been stolen."

"Well, the main fact has penetrated, so we'll proceed in one leap to the crisis. *That paper was stolen to-night!* A certain gentleman is suspected. They discovered the theft almost immediately, but the gentleman had vanished. It's being very quietly circulated that England and France combined will give a reward of fifty thousand francs for the return of the memoranda with the seals unbroken. No wonder those fellows are nutty. Every one of them has become an Arsène Lupin and a Sherlock Holmes rolled into one, and is figuring what he'll do with that fifty thousand francs—if he gets it."

Celia looked past him into a dream. "Oh, how would it *feel?* It would be like manna falling out of the Paris sky."

"If it fell on you," Philip asked, "what would you do first?"

"Cry, of course. Then I'd hug the world!"

"Or as much of it as you could get your arms around. The person nearest?" he asked, and gave a furtive look of longing at her flickering lips.

"Yes, the person nearest, no matter who it was, for I wouldn't know or care—I'd be just crazy," she said with positive, bird-like nods. "But no amount of money could make *you* act so silly, I suppose?"

"When you saw me playing the frisky goat in Les Deux Magots to-night," said Philip, lighting a cigarette, "I was celebrating quite a bit of money then."

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She had lifted the chocolate pot. It remained poised. "Sold something?" she asked enviously.

"Not so interesting. In fact, I'm afraid I'm not interesting, however you look at me." And he scratched his head sadly, so that the wreath sagged a little more to the east. "I'm one of those deadly classy students who's had Oriental rugs spread under his feet the whole way. I was born on Madison Avenue, New York, in a horrible, brown stone front that reeked with fat plush chairs, and where three solid meals a day were served with grossly comfortable regularity. Over here I've had nice rooms from the start, and weekly remittances from an adoring mother. When I was twenty-five, I came into what my father left me. To-day I got the lawyer's letter, saying that all preliminaries were finished, and I was—*it*. Father made his money in iron shutters. Except that I grew up with a passion to model things out of mud and dough and sand, I'd have followed him in the shutter business. So now you know the worst. I'm not Murger's romantic attic student at all. I feel as if I ought to apologise to the whole nine Muses for being so well fed and never having holes in my stockings." He shot out his hand so that it lay close to hers without touching it. "Isn't it about time we decided what you're going to do? Had you any plan in mind after—after——" He hesitated and looked the rest.

"After spending the night in the streets," she finished, with daring and bitterness. "Yes, I thought I'd go to the American Consul in the morning, and beg my fare back to Virginia."

"Leave Paris—give up painting?" he asked, dazed.

She laughed out loud. "If *you* have some of the earmarks of the Philistine, *I'm* an out-and-out fake—I can't paint. I thought I could, and I made others think so. But I'm one of those who mistake aptitude for talent. Paris is full of my sort—*near* singers, painters, sculptors—full of them! Poor things!" she said tenderly. "To put it poetically, they love the temple—they love to mingle with the inspired crowds that muster there—but they never, never, never can light a flame upon its altars." She gave a shrug of surrender. "And so I'm going back home, where they don't want me. They love me," she added quickly, "but they're poor, and I have younger sisters. Besides, I represent money thrown away. I'll go home, but I shan't stay there long. I've an aunt in New York, and she won't charge me much for board. I'll pick up typewriting there, or something."

"But look here, don't you think——" he began persuasively. He got no further, for three men entered. They were quiet but visibly excited. The rest clamoured around them.

"Baron von Volknerr!" was the name that ran through their controlled exclamations.

"That was the fellow who got away with the memoranda," Philip said, and stood up excitedly. "Have they got him? Who's got the money? I can't understand that over-the-speed-limit French."

Celia had turned around and was listening intently. "The man's been found," she said a moment later, "but not the paper; that was not on him."

"What are they saying now?" Philip urged.

Celia swung back, fright and confusion in her face as she stared up at him."

"What's the matter with *you?*" he demanded, startled.

"They say—they say the baron was found disguised—disguised as a *cocher*—found him stupid from drink—outside Les Deux Magots." She half rose and sank back, her eyes on the *cocher's* coat. She pointed a helpless finger at it.

Philip sat down and took imperative possession of the finger, "Keep quiet!" he whispered threateningly.

He beckoned to the waiter and paid the check. Commands continued to issue through his lips, set so rigidly they did not appear to move. "Keep absolutely still, or you'll ruin everything! Take the raincoat carelessly on your arm. Don't be nervous. Hand me that box of matches beside you. Go ahead of me, and slowly, and I'll walk close behind, so that attention won't be called to you at all. Ready? All right!"

They were out of doors in a moment. Celia was trembling as if she had finished a race. "Do you think——" she stammered.

"I told you to keep quiet!" He snatched the coat, rolled it into a wad, and tucked it under his cloak. "Come on!" he said, and passed his arm around her stumbling little figure.

He called to a loitering taxicab, gave the first address at a distance that he could think of, and climbed in after Celia. Her hands, folded together, were as numb as lumps of putty. As Philip drew down the shades and struck a match, she watched him with a still

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sort of nervousness that was racking. There was something overpowering in the feeling that the duration of a match's burning could hold such cardinal meaning.

After a search of the coat, Philip spoke one word: "Nothing."

She echoed it faintly as the match went out.

"If this ever held the paper——"

He was interrupted by a scream from Celia—stifled, yet certainly a scream. "Wait! What's that?"

"What's what?" he asked, so excited the words were angry.

"That lump that knocks against me as you shake the coat."

He struck another match, and the search was continued, their ravenous hands fumbling together over the glazey surface. Close to the coat's hem a secret pocket was found. This was sagging open, and held a square solid package. Philip peered down at it.

"British Embassy on the envelope!" he cried as the match went out. They gripped each other's hands. They were speechless, but hurrahs and laughter and songs of triumph were all in that long gaze that lightened the dusk of the cab.

"Your troubles are over," Philip said very softly, yet the words danced. "You're fifty thousand francs richer than you were ten minutes ago."

He felt her shudder, and she drew her hands away. "Why, we're both crazy! That money's yours—you found the paper."

"I was searching for *you*," he cried angrily, when he could speak.

"The coat's yours; you paid for it."

"I'd never have thought of taking it from that *cocher* if you hadn't spoken of it, and you wore it, so it's yours, and what's in it is yours, and that's an end to it!"

"It wouldn't be fair, Mr. Lowden. I wouldn't have kept the coat after to-night. You'd probably have taken it; you know that."

He lost his temper. No, he deliberately threw it away and shook his fist in her face.

"Don't be so angry because I tell you the simple truth," she pleaded.

"Simple truth?" he sneered. "Thin-blooded Puritanism! You're scared stiff that you'll owe me a cent. I thought I'd met conventional people before, but you're the limit! I knew you were from the first," he said, a fierce, wistful break in his voice. "Take those lonely days when I used to meet you in places, and looked my homesick soul out of my eyes, longing to speak to you. Would you melt? Would you meet me one thousand part of the way? Not *you*! You couldn't see me with a field-glass. Why, I believe you wouldn't accept a life-preserver on a sinking ship unless you'd been formally introduced to the man who offered it!"

She laughed at this wildly, gaily, but he continued to regard her with judging brows and stormy eyes. "I'm not as bad as that," she said softly. "I'll take part of the reward."

"Two-thirds?" he demanded.

"No, I'll take half."

"Let it go at that," he said, and wiped his face with a corner of his cloak. "You've about finished me. Now, what I suggest is this. We'll drive a little longer *until* it's morning. Then you'll wait somewhere in the cab while I go to my rooms and shed Julius Cæsar, returning in my new spring suit. After that we'll go for breakfast to some place where you can tidy up. After a lot of things to eat, the pageant will move on its victorious way to the English Embassy, and collect its just reward in bags of gold." He sat suddenly forward, slipped off the wreath, and began fanning himself with it. "By the way, what's become of that emotional outbreak you promised would happen if you came suddenly into money?"

Celia looked at him almost in fright. The faint hollows in her cheeks became rose-coloured discs.

"As I'm the nearest thing to you under these happy circumstances, there's a hug coming to me, and I'm waiting for it." His smile was gay, but his voice was dreaming, and his asking heart was shameless in his eyes.

"That doesn't count now," she said. "I'm only to get half the money, you see."

"Then half a hug," he insisted patiently. "I believe with Mark Twain: 'Let us not be too particular. It is better to have old, second-hand diamonds than to have none at all.'"

"Please don't talk so foolishly. Let's look at the package," she said rapidly, breathlessly, and drew back from his bending face.

"All right." He sadly replaced the wreath. "But, with your stern principles, I wonder you can mislead like that."

"We can see plainly now," she said, ignoring him, "for the morning has come."

Yes, the morning had come. They saw a ghostly Paris with hints of eastern gold. Their cab moaned in the sallow, empty streets as if the town were a resounding cave. The tall, melancholy houses showed every shade of grey from pearl to blackish drab.

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"A stillness like that at a grave settled within the cab."

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In some streets the electric lights gave mauve-pink throbs like the glow of weary fireflies; in some they were out. The morning had come, but as yet the city was theirs, for they did not see a living thing, not even the inevitable fat, sleek, French family cat.

"We will proceed to gloat," said Philip, as he went down into the secret pocket and brought up the large envelope.

He happened to draw it out so that its reverse side was uppermost. The seals were broken; the flap was torn in a ragged way and soiled. They did not look at each other. A stillness like that at a grave settled within the cab. Philip pulled out the things that bulged the paper—a time-table, a handkerchief with a coronet in the corner, a curious small weapon of tortoiseshell and gold, that proved on examination to be a toothpick.

After a short, furious laugh, he sat frowning at this medley. "Well, Miss Emery," he said, in a dull, unwilling way, "we have the envelope that once held the secret treaty, we have the baron's coat, we even have his rococo toothpick. But it's all something like that man 'who shook the hand of the man who shook the hand of John L. Sullivan.' That's about as near as *we* come to that fifty thousand francs."

She did not speak. Flesh had gone dead. She had sunk into the little, thin coat. Her eyes were dull, like bits of scorched blue slate. After his first look at her, Philip continued to study her with a sombre tenderness. She visualised for him something fragile out of which machinery had crushed life.

He put aside the coat and papers, and humbly, gently took her hand. "I'm so sorry—I'm so sorry," he said.

Her tears began to fall in a flaccid way. "Isn't it awful to be so optimistic—imaginative?" The words were feeble, jolting. "You see, I had that money—I'd even spent some of it on—on a *hat!* Oh, dear! And now it's all just as it was—there's nothing."

Philip seized her arm. He made her look at him. There was a rigid gleam in his eyes. "There's—*me*." He dared to pass his hand behind her shoulders and pleadingly touched his finger-tips to her farther cheek. "Do you want me? I love you so much!"

She came out of her tears and looked at him in a blind, shaken rapture.

"I love you—oh, I love you!" Philip kept murmuring. "And I'm not a conceited ass, but I think you do—or could—love me. I seem to feel it. Oh, do!" he said, as he saw her flush and shiver. "Don't wait. You don't know me, but it'll be all right—just as good to get married as quick as we can as to wait three months till I'd followed you to America and met your mother. That's the *junk* of life, I think. Love's the thing that *talks*. If you'll let me kiss you, I'll know it's going to be. May I—*may* I?"

He kissed her. It was like a little religious ceremony at first, he was so afraid of frightening her. Then he kissed her innumerable times, deeply, tenderly, from his soul.

"What's your first name, dear?" he asked in ecstasy.

The pale gold April morning was filling the cab.

THE SHADOW.

LO! this majestic shadow that sails over
The plain, devouring the tender green
Of fresh and growing things, young corn and clover,
A minute dully seen,
Then by *so* much the brighter when the gloom shall pass.
The shadow's self it is an angel's wing,
Protecting yet forewarning. For, alas!
Comes not another from the gloomy courts—
Another shade to fling
His cloak not o'er our eyes, but o'er our thoughts?

C. F. KEARY.

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THE PATERS' MATCH.

By LAURENCE NORTH,

Author of "The Golightlys," "Impatient Griselda," etc.

THE Unwise Parent knew very well that he was taking risks — terrible risks — for he had not touched a bat during more years than he cares to name. A sedentary occupation had increased the measurement of his waistcoat and had impaired his old agility. Much study, too, had not only wearied the flesh, but had robbed his eye of that keen alacrity without which there is no keeping up one's wicket.

All these things occurred to him when he got the Head's note, announcing the annual paters' match at the Engineer's preparatory school, and inviting the Engineer's father to play. All these things—aye, and more—delicate questions of ethics, of authority, egotism, and self-esteem, not unmixed with some fear of his own son and of a critical crew of small men, already showing a deadly proficiency in the art and craft of cricket.

However, the glorious uncertainty of the game reassured him. It was a sporting affair; even good men might come to grief, and bad men save their face. Who could tell?

He sat down, therefore, and wrote to the Head, saying he would be delighted to play. Play? He smiled at the silent mockery of the word on the paper before him. But no matter—he was in for it now. He added a line confessing his age-long lack of practice.

Back came a note from the breezy Head, who still plays, and plays well, for his county—

"Delighted to see you over at the nets any evening. Come and rub up."

Now, school is within easy reach of the house, and the walk over the fields on summer evenings is very pleasant to a wearied student. Besides, an anxious mother would have frequent news of the apple of her eye, whose banishment, even to the distance of two miles, is still something of a sorrow.

So the first fine evening saw the Parent on his way, brooding, as he went, a stave of Pindar, with whom his days were chiefly spent just then. "The Poet of the Prize Ring!" No, Voltaire was too harsh in that sneer, with its vulgar suggestion of "the fancy." The Poet of the Body Glorious, rather. What if Pindar had known the cricket-field—how he would have sung its praise and the praise of Olympian batsmen! What loss—oh, what loss—to lyric utterance and to cricket!

But this was all very far away from the present time and the present task. What had an elderly recluse to do in that galley? How far he had drifted from young life, even from the knowledge of the right thing to do! But the Head, with infinite tact, pulled his guest through.

The Parent arrived just about the hour of extra prep. Duffer that he was, he didn't see his duty. But the Head made that all right. When the bell rang indoors, he said to the boys, while the Parent marvelled at his own obtuseness: "Mr. Seton has asked you off extra prep. to-night."

The disciples, wreathed in smiles, and with grateful tugging of caps, filed past their spurious benefactor.

"Thank you, sir—thank you very much."

What a bonny crew they were, so fresh, so frank, so perfectly the ideal of the genus boy! The Engineer also made his bow and said "Sir," not to be conspicuous. It does not do to be conspicuous among the other fellows, and family ties are always embarrassing.

"Take my pads and my bat," said the Head. "My gloves are in the bag there."

They went down to the nets. Heavens, how stiff and awkward the Parent felt! He had had an awful moment just after he was armed. Had he, in sheer absence of mind, put his pads on wrong? He glanced down at his legs in terror. No, thanks to Fate, all right! So far, so good. And now to face the skilled workmen, who would ply their utmost craft on the fatal day. To-night, at first, there would be some leniency.

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"Mr. Seton is out of practice—hasn't played for years," said the Head.

Ellerman and Vane, both shaping extremely well as bowlers, took the hint and sent down easy ones. Less skilled imps joined in and kept things going merrily. For a little the Parent was content to block, until he felt easier.

But he knew that those practised pairs of eyes had noticed all the defects of his form—the stiffness, the unready action, the faulty defence. It was a queer psychological experience—a man in the hands of infants, trained infants, jealous of precision, worshippers only of the efficient, despisers of all that savoured of the muff. It would not do, however, to let action be sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought. But the pale cast of thought had been so long indulged that it was hard to combat. Hideous that devotion to the Irregular Verbs could bring a man to this! The Head, wiser in his generation, had kept the Irregular Verbs in their own place with a piece of willow. Happy man!

Resolution was helpful. When Ellerman sent down a careless ball, the Parent stepped out and punished it neatly enough. After that he cut into the net with more confidence. Once he drew squarely to leg.

"Getting it back, I see," the Head cried cheerfully from the next net.

"Hope so," said the Parent, stopping a yorker of little Vane's. That young rascal was wily, and needed watching. Already he had the trick of variety in his bowling. As yet there had been no disturbance in the timber yard, only a too easy, even a disgraceful, catch given by the Parent and held by—oh, mockery!—the Engineer. The Engineer thereupon betook himself to the adjoining net. He did not once look at what was going on next door. His face was set, his peach-like cheek uncomfortably flushed. Within his manly breast surged feelings unutterable. Hitherto he had kept the Fifth Commandment automatically. His father had been in all respects right worshipful, in many ways even a hero. But to-night—and before the other chaps too! The things they would say at bed-time! For Ellerman had got in his fine work now, and the Pater's stumps had no continuing city. He had been three times clean bowled, and once by Jilks Minor. Now, every fellow knew that Jilks Minor was a piffling little fool.

The summer evening drew to an end, and the Pater went home, chilled a little by his son's distant "Good night!" Too well he knew the reason.

In the wide, white dormitory, sweet with inblown scents from the hayfield, the Engineer got him to his prayers, fervent to-night, and original. "Dear Lord," he supplicated beneath the bed-clothes, "on the match day please send the Pater one of his awfullest headaches, so that he'll have to stay away, It's cruel, I know, and wicked, but, O Lord, Thou knowest what the fellows will say, and I'll not have any life. The Pater is a great man, and capital at mechanics for a person who mugs up Greek and stuff, though not very good at cricket, and I want the chaps to respect him. And, oh, please don't let them ever find out that he wrote a Greek grammar! Amen."

To-night the fellows, grateful for their escape from extra prep., had said nothing to wound the Engineer. Ellerman had even remarked magnanimously: "Awfully decent of your governor to ask us off. That old beast P.—meaning the Head—was nicely done in the eye. Extra prep.'s meat and drink to him. Hope your pater comes over often."

The Engineer sighed and did not echo the wish. Like Dumas Fils, he felt that his father was a troublesome child he had had in his youth. Had he known Alexandre's epigram, he would have endorsed it.

The Parent, left to himself, grew insolent and courted the vengeance of the high gods. He was, for all his shortcomings, well enough pleased with his practice. All things considered, he had come off not so badly. Another evening or two like this, and on the great day he would go to the wicket unashamed. He came home absurdly cheerful, gave the Mother news for which her heart hungered, and asked her airily to look out his old flannels.

Then the Lost Years arose and smote him.

"Your flannels, dear? They went to the rag-bag years ago! And even if they hadn't, think of your"—Marjorie smiled—"present circumference!"

Paterfamilias pulled a wry face, but at the same time he made a daft resolve. He went to his wardrobe and reverently took out his old college blazer, shabby but honourable. What memories of better days, of friends whom life had scattered far, of sunshine on Isis and Cher, of golden afternoons "above by Eynsham, down by Sandford," of dreaming spires whispering other than the last enchantments of the Middle Ages, were folded up with that venerable garment!

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Circumference be hanged! He would cut a presentable figure yet.

So next day he made a mysterious expedition to town—to the bookseller's, he said mendaciously. Now, the bookseller is a man of many devices, but taking your measure is not one of them.

Alas, various thronging duties made further evening visits to school impossible. The great day drew near, and no more practice. It was a dismal reflection, but, being in, Paterfamilias resolved to bear him so that the adversary might beware of him, if the high gods so willed. The high gods possibly were benevolent enough, but the little gods had a word to say, and they did their worst. The worst little god was the Engineer himself, when he came home for half-term holiday. He was quite candid.

"I say, daddy," he began heartlessly, "do you think you really *ought* to play in the paters'?"

"Why not?" asked the Father weakly.

"Getting a bit stiff, aren't you, like most old men?"

"Paters are stiff, aren't they?"

"Not *all*," said the Youth darkly. He shifted from foot to foot for a little. Then: "Ellerman's pater made forty-one last year. I looked it up in the school magazine."

"Oh!" said Paterfamilias, returning to his book.

"And, daddy, Vane's pater did the hat trick."

"Pretty poor boys in, I fancy."

"Our *men* can stand up to any bowling." With great dignity the Engineer left the room, and the incident was closed. In the evening the son went back to the house of correction.

"What is this?" said Marjorie, the evening before the match, when a mysterious parcel arrived from town.

"My new flannels," Paterfamilias answered, with what he felt was a poor pretence at carelessness.

"So very new," was Marjorie's comment, as she undid the paper. "Well, good luck to them! But I wish there had been time to send them to the wash before the match, just to take the blatant newness off them—they give you away. Do you know, Boy's worried about you."

"About me?" said the Sire disingenuously.

"Can't you understand?"

"Too well, dearest. The gods be good to me! I was a rash old fool."

"You were—a rash old man. You haven't bought a new bat, I hope? I think your old one's in the box-room."

"It's hopelessly out of date. Let it lie. No, I'll get the loan of one. I may not need it for long."

Marjorie lingered, ignoring her lord's pretence of absorption in work.

"Couldn't you cry off, dear? If you make a poor show, Boy will never hear the end of it."

"So sorry I can't now, dear; the Head has made up his team. Besides, the glorious uncertainty—you know the best man may go out first ball."

"Yes, but he's got a reputation, whereas *you*—— I feel for Boy."

"So do I, but we must take the chance now. No doubt there are other fathers as bad."

"Two blacks, or even ten, don't make a white, and you'll be so awfully white in those unsubdued things," she added with a woman's inconsequence.

"They were a necessity."

"I suppose so. Well, do your best. I hope, at any rate, to-morrow will be fine for the boys——"

"And the paters?"

"Oh, yes, for the paters, too," Marjorie conceded graciously, as she left her lord to his meditations. "I wonder what sort of figure you'll all cut?"

Paterfamilias sighed and bent to his work again. He read of heroes in the games, of the boy Pytheas of Aegina, winner of all events in the Complete Contest. Was it an omen of to-morrow?

To-morrow dawned, a fair July day, somewhat to the sultry side, perhaps, and with a threat of thunder on the horizon. The Engineer's elder sister watched the clouds anxiously. From early morning she had been all agog, for was she not asked to the match also? On half-term holiday she had received private messages from Ellerman and Vane, and a special invitation from the Head's wife. Now, the cakes on high days at her brother's school were a dream. Further, Ellerman and Vane, gallant youths both, had a fancy for a brown eye or so, and no false shame about declaring it. They had straitly charged the Engineer to see that his sister came, protesting their frank love the while. And Brown Eyes was nothing loth. There was also a new frock in the case. Cruel if it should rain!

The morning burned itself away. Two o'clock came, with a sky overcast. Brown Eyes flitted in and out, watching the clouds.

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She tapped at the door of her father's dressing-room. "Daddy, daddy, will it rain? Come and tell me."

"Run away, Goblin," said a voice through the door. "I'll be down in a moment."

Paterfamilias descended, all glorious within and without, for the old blazer was on again—after how many years? He took the omens and tried to be optimistic.

"Oh, my *white* daddy," said the Goblin, forgetting her fears of rain, "how funny you look! And what are the three golden pussy cats on your blazier?" The Goblin always calls it a "blazier."

"They're leopards, not pussy cats."

"But why?"

"Arms."

"Arms?" echoed the Goblin, puzzled. "What sort of arms? They're not on your sleeve."

"No, on my heart, in more ways than one—Plantagenet arms."

"That's like history," said the Goblin. "But why do you wear them?"

"Because of history—ancient history." Paterfamilias sighed. "I say, tell mummie to make haste."

"She's just coming," said the Goblin, with the coolness of her sex at such a juncture.

Paterfamilias tapped his foot. They waited.

"Splash!" A thundery drop of rain as big as half-a-crown fell on the doorstep—another and another. The Goblin fought down tears.

"It can't last," said her father. "Ah, here's the cab!" (The station fly was in commission.) "But we must wait a little; we'd be drenched in a moment running down to the gate." The rustic garden path does not suffer chariots to come to the door itself.

The Mother appeared, radiant and summery, "Tiresome!" she exclaimed, looking at the rain.

"I'm not the only person, it seems," said the Mere Man, "who has thought new clothes necessary."

"I had to keep you in countenance. You're certainly very fine. See you live up to it."

The shower continued furious. "Bad for the wicket," said Paterfamilias oracularly. "If this lasts, the ground will be a morass."

It lasted just half an hour. As they drove over, another long and fierce downpour pelted the countryside. The pitch, perfection at early morn, was sad to behold. The Head looked a little rueful. "We must wait a bit," he said, as he welcomed his guests; "but I think we've had the worst of it."

School was all cheerful bustle. Two canvas-roofed brakes, with parents and guardians, sisters, cousins, and aunts, drove up from the station. Marjorie took comfort in Major Oliphant's ample girth, his ponderous going. But his flannels had a righteous and decent antiquity. She regretted the rash act that sent her lord's to the rag-bag. When all the paters had changed, her man was still too conspicuously splendid. He courted disaster.

But now the sun shone again bravely, and the Head declared it safe to begin. They moved towards the pavilion. The paters won the toss. Dr. Ellerman was chosen skipper. He came up to Paterfamilias. "We'll send you and Major Oliphant in first," he said.

"All right," said the victim, *feigning* cheerfulness. A new dread possessed him. He had duly ordered shoes, but they had not come—confound the bootmaker!—and he had to wear an old tennis pair. And now, on this slippery ground—confusion!

The Engineer had covertly examined the paternal footgear. He made no remarks, but the Sire was conscious of a new abasement.

The field was set. The rest of the boys arranged themselves, a line of chattering magpies, on long benches. The ladies settled into deck-chairs, with boards underfoot to ward off the damp. The paters, save two, herded in front of the pavilion.

As *the* Pater went down to the wicket, he passed the Head's wife, full of cares, but joyous, as ever on festal days.

"How smart your nice new things look!" she said, beaming.

The Pater acknowledged the compliment suitably, but the greeting depressed him. He *was* kenspeckle, then, even unto womankind. Heaven send he did not disgrace his cloth! And the Head's spouse herself was a pretty hand with the bat. Her team against the school was an annual event of undoubted importance. He trudged on to his crease quaking.

Oh, that rain! The foothold, to one in tennis shoes, was as a thousand skating rinks. The first over was to his end. What if he slipped! That was not to be thought of. Now for the grapple! Yet, oh, for a little more practice! Whom has he to face? Ah, of course, the judicious Ellerman! He glanced behind him. Who was keeping wicket? Who but the Engineer, impassive, his face a peachy mask. The Pater settled

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his eyeglasses on his nose, prayed to Chance, and took centre. He blocked Ellerman's trial ball and plucked up heart. Even if he did go out with his egg unbroken, it was no real disgrace. To business, then! What would that wily imp send down next? The suspense was agony.

Even in a sitting posture, confused and shaken as he was, he had presence of mind to join in the laughter that, after a moment's awful silence, surged inextinguishable over the field.

He got up painfully, wondering to what extent the wet grass had left its green

"He came down in the pulpy ground squarely, with a dire squish."

It came, slow, insidious, temptingly easy and as deceptive.

Paterfamilias stepped out, swiped, and——

As the bails flew, the learned elder's feet likewise flew from under him. He came down in the pulpy ground squarely, with a dire squish.

impress on his person, and began to retire in as good order as he could. Passing the blushing Ellerman, he raised his cap. "Sir," he said, "I salute you."

He had not dared to catch his son's eye, but he knew it must be cold and stern.

Luck was with the League of Youth that

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day. The paters were all out for a paltry fifty-four. But even Major Oliphant broke his duck's egg. Nobody kept the Engineer's father in countenance.

Then heavily he went out with the rest to field. He had not had a chance of a word with Marjorie, and he knew not, and dared not ask any man or boy, to what extent, if any, his fall had lent him a grotesque decoration on the new white expanse.

Dr. Ellerman placed Paterfamilias at cover point, where he had his back to the ladies. The over brought respite, but the next, of course, renewed the torture. And his fielding, by reason of those shoes, was a poor affair at the best. The afternoon dragged away rather miserably. It had fallen dull and chilly. Even the creditable twenty-five made by the Engineer off Vane *père's* bowling was not all comfort. Marjorie would be making odious comparisons in her secret thoughts. Really, ancients who had criminally neglected their cricket ought not to expose themselves to such whips and scorns. And yet what better did they deserve? But there must be no more of these unsuitable games. *La jeunesse n'a qu'un temps.*

At tea-time, when the Goblin, with her squires attendant, was deep in the famous cakes, the father encountered his son. Absurd, but he actually feared the atom he had begotten! The atom, mollified with feasting, was magnanimous.

"Tell you what, daddy," he said—"during the holidays I'd better bowl to you for half an hour every day. My eye, you *are* rocky, you know! We must put you in shape for next year."

"Agreed," said the Sire, glad to have escaped on such easy terms.

The loss of time owing to the rain made it a one-innings match. In honour of the school's not inglorious victory, Paterfamilias publicly begged an extra half-holiday next week for the boys. Their cheers told him he had saved his own and his son's face.

Yet there remained one anxiety.

"Am I," he said anxiously to Marjorie, as they were leaving, "a very grotesque spectacle—a muddied oaf, that is, or a verdant one, after my tumble?"

"It seems like a miracle," Marjorie said, laughing, "but it's true, all the same—you came out of it—spotless."

"I feared," he said—"I feared——"

"Yes," she said, "and for a moment so did I. It would have been too grotesque, and with those resplendent togs, too! But all's well that ends well. Wasn't it nice that the Boy made such a good score? I gave him half-a-crown."

"Fond and foolish woman," said the Pessimist, "I foresee the tuck-shop—and retribution."

After all, a long-suffering father was avenged

SEA-LAVENDER.

DOWN in the marshes there are mists of mauve and lilac,
Down by the sand-dunes where the salt winds softly stir,
By grey sea-holly and long drifts o' sedge-grass,
There in cool cloudlets blooms sea-lavender;
Down in the marshes where the grey gulls hover,
Where pipe o' lapwing echoes o'er the strand,
Wave on soft wave of wondrous blossom-lustre
Bridges dim spaces left 'twixt sea and land.

Do mermaids come there in the dawn, I wonder,
Dripping the sea-spray from their night-dark hair,
Singing strange songs all haunting, wistful sweetness,
The while they gather sheaves of blossoms fair.
Then passing hence with chaplets cobweb-spangled,
'Mid distant call o' sea-waves dies their strain,
While my sea-lavender across the marshes
Sweeps in lone loveliness till dawn again.

AUGUSTA HANCOCK.

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ENGLAND'S STORY IN PORTRAIT AND PICTURE.

XXXIII. THE REIGN OF GEORGE II.

1727–1760.

GEORGE II. was forty-four when he ascended the throne, and his habits and manners were formed beyond change by the exercise of such royal powers as the kings of England still possessed. Among his contemporaries he had very severe critics, and the one who has made most impression on posterity was the bitter but entertaining John Hervey, second son of the Earl of Bristol, created Lord Hervey of Ickworth in 1733. Of him something may be said here, before we describe George II., that it may be understood what manner of man was he who has left the most vivid impression of the king.

GEORGE II., KING OF ENGLAND 1727-1760. BY SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

Lord Hervey was a sickly, smiling personage to the view of his friends, handsome and the husband of a lovely wife (Molly Lepell, maid of honour to Queen Caroline when Princess of Wales), witty, and enlivening the Court by his sallies. He was indeed a thorough courtier, who did not hesitate to make fun of great persons to their faces, but satirised them behind their backs. He was constantly ill throughout his life, but lived to 1743, when he was forty-six, in spite of his devotion to tea, which his father described as "that detestable and poisonous plant, which had once brought him to death's door, and, if persisted in, would carry him through it." It is he who has left the most vivid picture of George II., but no doubt some deductions must be made from its severity. He even says of the king: "I do not believe that there ever lived a man to whose temper benevolence was so absolutely a stranger." George was certainly very selfish, very vain, very coarse, and very ignorant. To the wits he was "dapper George," and to the caricaturists a little strutting cock-sparrow. But he was acute, brave, careful in discharge of his duties, though he interpreted them narrowly. He did not love the English or understand the English Constitution. Lord Hervey says this very sharply: "He hated the English as all king-killers and republicans, and grudged them their liberty as well as their wealth."

It was fortunate that George had a very

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capable and masterful wife and a very able and steady minister. Caroline of Anspach, the queen, exercised behind the scenes a most powerful influence on the Government. Outwardly, she appeared to be interested chiefly in philosophy and theology, and she gathered round her the clever men of the day and the latitudinarian, if not learned, ecclesiastics. It is to her immortal honour that she brought forth from obscurity—"not dead, but buried," as one of his friends described him—the great Joseph Butler, author of "The Analogy of Religion" and the still more valuable "Sermons," who became Bishop of Bristol and afterwards of Durham, and was the greatest English philosopher and divine of the age—a man, too, of goodness as sterling as his wisdom was deep. While the queen appeared to be immersed in literature, and was doing something to atone for the Hanoverian neglect of art—her husband, it is well known, declared his dislike of "boetry and bainting"—she was really an active political influence, sitting quietly by when George talked with his minister, and supporting Walpole with all her sagacity and all her power. King and queen were, no doubt, sincerely attached, though the queen led a life of devotion to her husband's whims which was little short of martyrdom. Their family life was wretched. Frederick, Prince of Wales, who married Augusta, Princess of Saxe-Gotha—a line which has conferred greater benefits on England than any other foreign house, for it has given us the mother of George III. and the husband of Victoria—had all the mercurial properties which his parents lacked, and was destitute of all the solid qualities which were theirs. He followed in his father's steps by being opposed to the king in politics, and set a bad example in that respect which was followed in the next reign. He was hated by his parents, and his mother spoke of him as "a nauseous beast," and "the greatest liar that ever spoke." He lived till 1751, a continual thorn in his parents' side; but they cannot be said to have deserved a better son, or to have brought their children up to be anything but what they became.

CAROLINE, QUEEN TO GEORGE II.

From an engraving by G. Vertue, after the portrait by Amiconi.

For the first fifteen years of the reign Walpole remained in power, after a brief attempt of the king's to do without him. He seemed to be destined to die in command: and, indeed, he had come to think, says Lord Hervey, "that he was to England what

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a spring was to a watch, and that the wheels would stand still if he were taken away." He removed from office everyone in whom he scented a possible rival — Townshend, Chesterfield, the witty letter-writer, who had considerable political talent, Pulteney, the orator, and Carteret, the close student of foreign affairs. But, as was natural, this strengthened the party which grew up determined to oust him. Bolingbroke, the cleverest political writer of the day, who had been allowed to return from exile in 1725, led the literary opposition to Walpole, And beside him, in later years, came the greatest of the younger opposition—to whom the minister gave the scornful nickname of "the Boys"—William Pitt, one of the very greatest statesmen who have ever guided the destinies of the English race at home and beyond the seas.

Thus the opposition grew while Walpole was directing the English foreign policy in an attempt to keep out of foreign entanglements. Allied with the French minister Fleury, he made treaties to resist the ambition of Spain, now dominated by

DEFEAT OF THE SPANISH ATTACK ON GIBRALTAR, 1727.

criticised the Whig foreign policy in his "Letters on History," the theory of government on which their power was based in "The Patriot King," and, in "The Craftsman," denounced the corruption which marked the rule of Walpole. He was the most brilliant of the older opponents of the minister, and survived his downfall some nine years.

Bright as the Greek to whom all toil was ease
Flash'd forth the English Alcibiades.
He for whom Swift had not one cynic sneer,
Whom hardiest Walpole honour'd with his fear,
Whose lost harangues a Pitt could more deplore
Than all the gaps in Greek and Roman lore.

"The Termagant," Elizabeth Farnese. In 1726 the Treaty of Hanover (England, France, Prussia, and Holland) was a check to the Empire and Spain. Gibraltar suffered siege from the Spaniards, and Portobello was blockaded by the English. The Treaty of Seville, 1729, made peace with Spain. When, in 1733, the Polish Succession War broke out, Walpole kept England out of it; but there was growing hostility to Spain, due largely to illicit trade in South America, where Englishmen systematically disregarded the Treaty of Utrecht, and the Spaniards

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naturally asserted a right of search to protect themselves. But England's tastes were all for piracy. Finally, the captain of a merchantman, one Jenkins, declared that a Spanish coastguard captain had cut off his lawyer Hardwicke, were in favour of it; but Walpole held out year after year, till, in 1741, the election showed clear signs that the country was against him—though not sufficient to upset him in a Parliament largely

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS IN SIR ROBERT WALPOLE'S ADMINISTRATION, 1730.
BY WILLIAM HOGARTH AND SIR JAMES THORNHILL.

The Speaker, Arthur Onslow, is shown in the chair, with Sir Robert Walpole standing on his right. Among the other members represented are Sidney Godolphin, Sir Joseph Jekyll, Colonel Onslow, Edward Stables, and Sir James Thornhill. The original is in the collection of the Earl of Onslow.

ears, and, to prove it, showed them to the excited public wrapped up in cotton-wool.

The king shared the desire for war, and even members of the Walpole Cabinet, such as the intriguing Duke of Newcastle and the able consisting of members who owed their places to nomination or bribery—and in 1742 he was defeated (when the petition as to the Chippenham election was voted on by the Commons), and was forced to resign. He

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died three years later as Earl of Orford, in the very year when England, which he had kept for twenty years at peace, was in the midst of a double war. Lord Wilmington (Sir Spencer Compton) was the nominal, Carteret (afterwards Earl Granville) the real, head of the ministry which succeeded him. His interest, like the king's, lay entirely in foreign politics. England was already at war with Spain, when the aggression of Frederick, King of Prussia, on Maria Theresa, the daughter of the Emperor Charles VI. (whom England, thirty years before, had tried to seat on the throne of Spain), and heiress of the Austrian dominions, moved England to take the field in support of "the

THE MARRIAGE OF ANNE, PRINCESS ROYAL, DAUGHTER OF GEORGE II., TO WILLIAM, PRINCE OF ORANGE, IN ST. JAMES'S CHAPEL, 1734.

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balance of power." Thus England again found herself at war with France, which was Prussia's ally, and on June 16, 1743, George himself defeated the French at Dettingen, showing conspicuous courage, if no great military judgment. On May 11, 1745, when the king's second son, William, Duke of Cumberland, was in command, the French reversed the medal by winning a victory at Fontenoy, after which the English troops retired from the Netherlands.

Meanwhile, grave danger had arisen at home, and it was this that the Duke of Cumberland was summoned to confront.

This was the Rebellion of '45, round which so many romantic memories have clustered. James III. and VIII., as his supporters styled him, had sunk into lethargy after the defeat of his expedition in 1715, and lived chiefly at Rome in peaceful retirement. His sons, Charles and Henry, were brave, bright boys, on whom English visitors looked with interest. In 1744 the elder determined to seek his own fortune, and the

GEORGE II. SITTING IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND RECEIVING THE SPEAKER OF THE COMMONS, TO HEAR THE ROYAL ASSENT TO A BILL, 1742.

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"THE BATTLE OF FONTENOY, 1745: THE FRENCH AND THE ALLIES CONFRONTING EACH OTHER." BY FELIX PHILIPPOTEAUX.

From the picture in the South Kensington Museum.

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PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD STUART, "THE YOUNG PRETENDER."
A portrait painted by L. Tocqué in 1748.

restoration of the Stuarts, in an attempt to rouse England and Scotland to his cause. Shaking off his younger brother with some transparent excuse, he passed through France, collecting men, money, and ponies, and on July 25, 1745, he landed near Moidart, in Inverness. The Camerons and Macdonalds soon joined him, and, as he marched southwards, he was met with increasing enthusiasm and rewarded with unbroken success. He swept past General Cope and marched to Perth, and on to Edinburgh, where he established himself, as his father's representative, in Holyrood Palace, hardly a month after he had landed. There he held court, and throngs of Scots, from Lowlands as well as Highlands, "fair women and brave men," attended him. His own high spirits, courage, generosity, and personal charm, endeared him to all who saw him, and it seemed to many that he was destined to bring back, on a wave of popular enthusiasm, the beloved race of the old Stuart kings, a native dynasty, now hallowed, if not taught wisdom, by suffering and exile. Everyone who has read "Waverley" remembers the romance and charm of the days at Holyrood, when one of the old Scottish line was throned in the house of his ancestors, "with an air of dignity mingled with courtesy which well became his high birth and lofty pretensions."

The establishment of the Stuart Court at Holyrood caused many hesitating sympathisers to flock to the uplifted standard. As Scott says: "The Tory nobility, depending for their reflected lustre upon the sunshine of a court, had been for some time gradually reconciling themselves to the new dynasty. But the wealthy country gentlemen of England, a rank which retained, with much of the ancient manners and primitive integrity, a great proportion of obstinate and unyielding prejudice, stood aloof in haughty and sullen opposition, and cast many a look of mingled regret and hope" towards the exiles abroad. It was to these

"THE BATTLE OF PRESTONPANS, 1745." BY SIR WILLIAM ALLAN.

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"THE ENTRY OF PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD INTO EDINBURGH IN 1745." BY T. DUNCAN, A.R.A.

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that Charles now looked for support, and he determined to march to London. On September 21, 1745, he defeated Cope at Prestonpans, near Edinburgh, where was slain Colonel Gardiner, a good Christian and gallant man, whose memory was long revered, and is preserved by an obelisk where he fell. Charles took up his quarters at Pinkie, the scene of the famous battle of the days of Edward VI., which might seem to be avenged, and thence, while "doubtful people daily became Jacobites," marched to the frontier, crossed it, and captured Carlisle. Thence, on November 20, he marched southwards. But here he was met by constant disappointment. His own officers quarrelled, and some were suspected of treachery. The Lancashire folk, who had joined in 1715, were timorous in 1745. At Manchester he won some support from old Jacobite families and the Nonjurors: one Deacon, the son of a Nonjuring bishop, joined his forces, and eventually perished on the block. He advanced to Derby, and there the crisis was reached. He was over-persuaded to return to Scotland, with the hope of advance another year. Meanwhile, much of the land behind him had been won back by the Hanoverians, and though he severely defeated their troops at Falkirk on January 17, 1746, he was losing men daily in the bitter winter. The Irish dragoons at Falkirk "fled outright," and the defeat of Hawley was as disgraceful as had been that of Cope the autumn before.

But now William, Duke of Cumberland, a more experienced, if not a better, general, was placed in command of the English troops, and Charles's last chance passed away. He retired slowly to the north, till, on April 16, he turned to meet his foes on Culloden Moor, near Inverness. The Highlanders, who had so often carried the day by the rush of an irresistible onslaught, tried again their famous tactics, but were met by fixed bayonets, and were driven off thrice. No quarter was given by the victorious troops. Charles was in hiding for many months, a price on his head, wandering in disguise over desolate moors, and sleeping in hiding-places known to many faithful clansmen. He owed his safety especially to the skill and bravery of a young lady, Flora Macdonald, disguised as whose servant he passed through many perils; and at length he escaped to France.

Once again, in later years, he visited England, and was seen in London by a few supporters, but the last chance for the Stuarts to recover the throne was gone. Charles

"THE END OF THE '45 REBELLION." BY W. B. HOLE, A.R.S.A.

Reproduced from the etching published by Virtue & Co.

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"BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE." BY JOHN PETTIE, R.A.

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married Louise of Stolberg, and lived in Italy, unhappily and at the end discreditably, till 1788, surviving his father for twenty-two years. His brother, who was made a cardinal of the Roman Church, was called Henry IX., and lived till 1807, accepting a pension from George III. during the stress of the Revolution.

The rebellion was cruelly put down. Lords Balmerino, Kilmarnock, and Lovat—a cunning old schemer, caught at last, whose face was made immortal by Hogarth—were executed, with nine other officers. The heritable jurisdictions of the chiefs of the clans were abolished, and it was made illegal to wear the kilt or the tartan. The episcopal clergy were cruelly persecuted, and at length the independent life of the northern Celt was extinguished. Highland regiments were raised which added glory to the British Army, and the Union was at last accomplished by the results of the Rebellion.

The European war continued till 1748, when, by the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, France and England restored their conquests. Perhaps the most famous incident in it was the voyage of Captain Anson round the world, from 1740 to 1744, a triumph of English seamanship and endurance.

During these years of war a movement of much wider importance was passing over English society. Religion, it was thought, was ebbing away. Bishop Butler had written in profound depression that men now seemed to think its claims hardly worth investigation, and he had set himself to show that, even on grounds of probability, they should reassert their power over the human race. But English religion was to be restored not by philosophy, but by devotion. In 1729 some young Oxford students started a society to live a simple life of obedience to the Bible and Prayer Book, with fasting, almsgiving,

"THE TAKING OF FORT ST. PHILIPPE, PORT MAHON, 1756." BY G. WACHSMUTH.

visiting of the sick and imprisoned, and constant reception of the Holy Communion. John Wesley (1703–1791), Fellow of Lincoln College, son of a famous divine who was Rector of Epworth, and a wise and holy mother, was the leader, and with him was his brother Charles, the former a great preacher and organiser, the latter a musician and hymn-writer of real excellence. The Oxford Society spread into the country. It gained new force from the fiery eloquence of George Whitefield (1714–1770), the son of the keeper of "The Bell" at Gloucester. From 1735 to 1738 John Wesley was in America, preaching in the new colony of Georgia, founded by

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"THE DEATH OF GENERAL WOLFE ON THE HEIGHTS OF ABRAHAM, QUEBEC, 1759." BY SIR BENJAMIN WEST, P.R.A.

From the picture in the collection of the Duke of Westminster.

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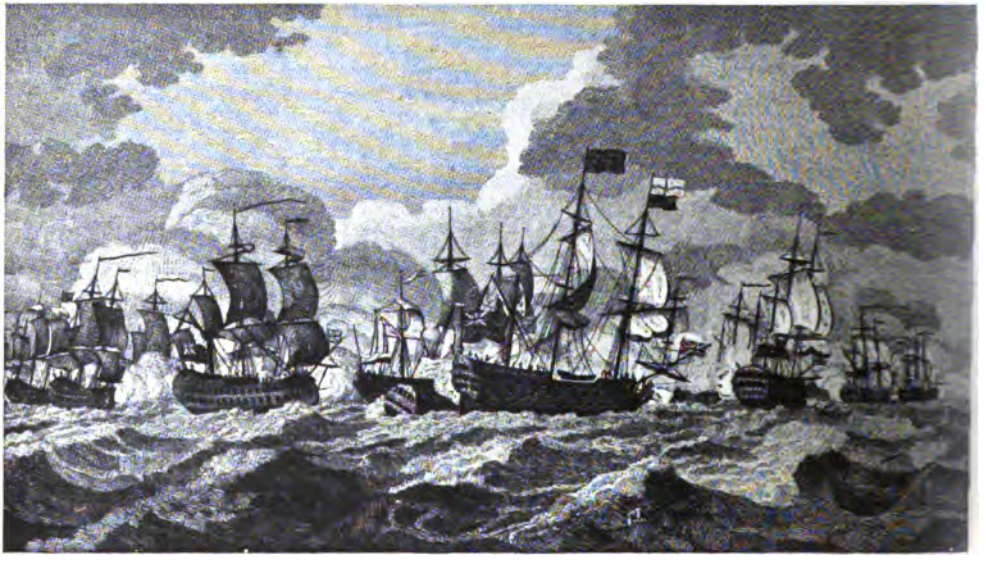
General Oglethorpe; but he was not successful, and returned to England in a state of profound depression. From this he was aroused by the preaching of the Moravians, a German sect who had a chapel in Aldersgate Street. From the moment of his "conversion" he began to preach with renewed zeal and power. He went all over England, preaching in churches, and afterwards out of doors, and was listened to with conviction by thousands in every class of society, but particularly by the poor. The doctrine of the "new birth," which was by some interpreted as synonymous with "instantaneous conversion," became the motive power of a great revival of English religion. Religious societies formed on the method of the Wesleys—and the members soon began to be nicknamed Methodists — grew up all over England. Wesley felt that the whole world was his parish, and devoted himself, heart and soul and body, to his missionary work. No more striking scene in English history can be found than that of his preaching to the neglected colliers of Kingswood, when, on a bright February day, a vast throng of rich and poor gathered about him, and "the voice of the great preacher pealed with a thrilling power to the very outskirts of the mighty throng. The picturesque novelty of the occasion and of the scene, the contagious emotion of so great a multitude, a deep sense of the condition of his hearers, and of the momentous importance of the step he was taking, gave an additional solemnity to his eloquence. His rude auditors were electrified. They stood for a time in rapt and motionless attention. Some tears might be seen forming white gutters down cheeks blackened from the coal mine. Then sobs and groans told how hard hearts were melting at his words. A fire was kindled among the outcasts of Kingswood which burnt long and fiercely, and was destined in a few years to overspread the land." Thus Mr. Lecky told of the turning-point in the history of Methodism. For many years Wesley kept the flame alight. Whitefield came to oppose him bitterly, yet did not really doubt his holiness and self-devotion. Bishops and clergy deplored the wild excesses of his followers. Theologians deprecated the vagaries of Methodist doctrine. But of the revolution he effected in English religion, and the improvement he began in English morals, no one can doubt. He was *one of* the great leaders in English history.



THE GREAT SEA-FIGHT OFF BELLEISLE, 1759.

The same praise, at the very least, must be given to his great contemporary, William Pitt. Consumed by the fire of a righteous enthusiasm and glowing patriotism, the "young cornet of horse" brought a new force into English politics as Wesley *did* into English religion. He had attacked Walpole: he attacked the Hanoverian policy of Carteret with equal fierceness. At last, in 1746, he took office, and proved his ability and abhorrence of corruption. When Henry

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Pelham—who was Prime Minister from 1744, when Carteret fell—died in 1754, Pitt stood aside, and the ministry, though supported by Henry Fox, whose eloquence was almost as effective as Pitt's, though his character was on an entirely lower level, soon failed to hold its own. Pitt returned to power in 1756, and in 1757 was joined by the Duke of Newcastle, the one devoting himself to the needs of his country, and the conduct of the war in which she was now embarked, the other to petty details of place, promotion, and pelf, on which the party system so much depends.

captured Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, and Trichinopoly, in Southern India, and by the battle of Plassey, 1757, avenged the horrors of the "Black Hole" of Calcutta, in which more than a hundred English men and women had perished in a single night, and overthrew Suraja-Daulah and gave the sovereignty of Bengal to Mir Jaffar under English supervision. Eyre Coote established English supremacy in the south by the victory of Wandewash in 1760, and the British Empire in India was founded.

In America the ministry of Pitt saw even more remarkable triumphs. The thirteen

"THE BATTLE OF QUIBERON BAY, BELLEISLE, 1759: ADMIRAL HAWKE'S VICTORY OVER THE FRENCH FLEET COMMANDED BY MARSHAL CONFLANS." BY R. PATON.

In 1756 broke out the Seven Years' War. It was partly a renewal of the contest between Austria and Prussia, partly a death struggle for the possession of power overseas between England and France. It had been prepared since 1748 by growing animosity in India and America. The French showed a marked capacity for rule in India. Dupleix planned the conquest of the Mogul Empire, and began the training of native troops (Sepoys). This threatened the existence of the English traders and the great East India Company. There arose a man of extraordinary genius to save them. Robert Clive, who went out as a boy-clerk from England, became a great general,

colonies, very different in origin and constitution, were increasing in wealth and importance, but had no strong ties to the Home Country, and were in constant danger from the French colonies which surrounded them on every side. War broke out, and the "American Indians," allied with the French, inflicted several disastrous defeats on the colonies, and in 1755 General Braddock was defeated and slain in an attack on the French Fort Duquesne. Montcalm, the French general, pushed the successes still further. And about this time broke out the great European war, in which England stood with Prussia against the newly-allied Louis XV. and Maria Theresa. At first

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disasters came upon England on every side. Admiral Byng failed to save Minorca, and was shot for cowardice, when at most he was guilty of want of judgment. The English, said Voltaire, shoot an admiral to encourage the others. The Duke of Cumberland was compelled to sign the Convention of Closter-seven, 1757, by which Hanover was overrun by France. England was at the lowest ebb.

In June, 1757, Pitt became chief minister. "I am sure," he said, "that I can save the country, and that no one else can." He became an organiser of victory such as England had never before seen. His insight recognised the genius of Wolfe, who drove the French out of the English colonies, sailed up the St. Lawrence, and scaled the heights of Abraham to the capture of Quebec. The victory which gave Canada to the English cost the life of the heroic commander, as it did of his opponent, Montcalm; but the dearly-bought victory was the beginning of what will doubtless prove one of the greatest nations of history, dwelling in the Canada which English rule has made into one of the mightiest and most progressive of Powers.

The capture of Quebec, and the success of Clive in India, are seen to-day vastly to surpass in importance the victories which England was winning in the European war. But while the French colonies were being conquered, Hawke shattered the French fleet in Quiberon Bay, September, 1759, and on August 1 of the same year, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, with the English troops, defeated the French at Minden. It was, indeed, a year of victories such as England had never known. Frederick the Great of Prussia, whom English people enthusiastically dubbed "the Protestant hero," was founding a great Power in Germany by the defeat of France and Austria, and when George II. died, on October 25, 1760, there were no doubtful signs that England and her allies were soon to be the arbiters of Europe. It was no king who had caused this, but the little keen-eyed, hook-nosed man who had been a cornet of horse, and was now the greatest orator and statesman England had produced for over a hundred years.

LORD CLIVE. BY N. DANCE.

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THE FURNACE.

By FREDERICK ORIN BARTLETT.

THE big limousine bucked the gullied road stubbornly but indignantly, like a blooded horse. It wasn't made for work in the backwoods of Idaho. Neither were the occupants of the car. Jean, the chauffeur, fresh from the clear air and smooth roads of the Riviera, was nearly exhausted. This sultry atmosphere, heavy with the taint of distant forest fires, inflamed his eyes. Lovell, fifty pounds overweight, was battered about like a football on the back seat. His daughter, of lighter model, clung wearily to her corner in dusty misery. After an uncommonly severe jounce, she observed to her father—

"You might leave *something* to the imagination."

"I wish I'd left this whole cussed trip to the imagination!" he retorted.

But that wasn't his way in anything. Therefore, when he became interested in tapping this wild region with a railroad, nothing would do but that he must go over the ground himself. This had been his method in building up his Kansas line. It was said he knew every farm along the right-of-way. It is certain that every farm-owner knew him, and equally certain that half of them would have shot him on sight had they dared. His policy of not furnishing them cars for their ripe wheat, except on his own terms, hadn't made him popular. Young Dennison of Wichita followed him last year all the way to Chicago, and threatened to maul him. The brute would have done it, too, if half a dozen clerks had not interfered. The young anarchist had allowed his wheat to rot, and then, when the banks foreclosed on his farm, had blamed Lovell.

The machine struck a half-hidden log, bounded high into the air, and came down stock-still. It took Jean but a second to learn that the damage this time was serious—a shaft was broken. He removed his cap and goggles with something like relief, while Lovell climbed out and waddled to his side. The girl crossed the road and calmly seated herself in the shadows, where she waited like an indifferent onlooker. That was her attitude towards life in general, but always she was, as now, a beautiful and picturesque onlooker.

"Well," demanded Lovell, as the chauffeur continued to stare helplessly at the machine, "are you trying to hypnotise it?"

Jean shrugged his shoulders.

"I can do nothing," he answered. "It is necessary to send to Detroit for a new shaft."

"Detroit!" exclaimed Lovell. He turned to his daughter "Do you hear that cheerful news, Lady Alice?"

He used her nickname—the name she had been christened when, at eight, she had thrown up her head and declared she would marry a lord.

"I hear," she answered indifferently. "Whom shall we send?"

Lovell brought his jaws together with a snap. This was just the sort of emergency in which he figured at his best.

"I don't know," he answered, with unexpected calmness. "If I were you or the Frenchman, I don't suppose I'd send at all; I'd sit down and whistle for it. As it is, I reckon we'll continue this pleasant journey on foot."

They hadn't passed a house in the last fifty miles, so it was obvious that the only thing to do was to go straight on. During the next three hours Lovell showed something of what he was made. This wasn't an easy undertaking for him. He was heavy, he hadn't walked a mile in ten years, and the air was suffocatingly dead, yet he never stopped.

Lady Alice walked by his side. She didn't protest, because she realised it was quite useless. Her feet soon went lame, and her dainty skin burned like fire.

Behind the two limped Jean.

The sun had already disappeared in a smoky haze before Lovell found any outlet to this interminable yellow highway. Then it was only a footpath which led him to a clearing, containing, in one corner, a log

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hut. They heard the chock of an axe, but the woodsman was not in sight. They reached the door of the shack and found it empty. Lady Alice sank down on the sill as Lovell shouted a summons.

In reply, the chopping ceased, and a young man appeared. He was some six feet tall, with hair and beard as black as night. One knew he was young by the freshness of the brown eye set in the haggard face, by the firmness of his bared, big-muscled forearms. He was dressed in a flannel shirt, open at the throat, belted trousers, and heavy boots. At sight of Lovell his eyes narrowed. He glanced at Jean and then at the girl on the door-sill. The latter met his gaze steadily and with the slightest lift of her head. Then, as though not finding sufficient interest there to hold her attention, she dropped her chin in her hands and stared at the ground.

But Lovell felt queer for a moment. The man standing there in front of him was Dennison of Wichita—the same who, a year ago, had threatened "to beat him to within an inch of his life."

"Can I hire a team here?" demanded Lovell, with no show of recognition.

"No," answered Dennison decidedly.

He glanced at the girl. He found her looking at him. She showed every appearance of being annoyed.

"Then——" began Lovell.

Dennison took a couple of steps forward. His hands were clenched.

"I reckon you're to stay here for a while, Lovell," he burst out.

Cornered, Lovell felt within him a primeval fighting lust. He had his eye on a loose stone about the size of his two fists.

"What do you mean?"

Dennison spoke fiercely.

"It seems like you must have come in answer to a prayer," he broke out. "It was you who drove me up here. After you took my farm, there was nothing for me but this—a homestead. I've been bucking these trees alone for five months—sick, half the time. Now, I've got just a month left. If I don't clear the rest of this, I lose my rights."

He paused, he was breathing through his teeth.

"I didn't see how I was going to do it, but now"—he looked round again at the girl and the other man, he smiled grimly—"but now—with four of us—I reckon I *can* do it, Lovell."

He picked up the stone at Lovell's feet and tossed it away out of temptation.

II.

It was an outrageous proposition. Lovell and Jean were to help in the woods, and Lady Alice was to do the cooking. If, at the end of the month, enough land had been cleared to fulfil the requirements of the homestead laws, then Dennison would guide the party to the railroad.

Lovell tried threats and bribes—he was a master of both—but he might just as well have talked to one of the slim straight pines. As he voiced his threats, they sounded pitifully weak even to him. It was difficult to associate either law courts or gaols with these big purple hills, with these vast, unpeopled virgin acres.

"I'm not keeping you by force," Dennison explained; "there's the road. But my nearest neighbour is Brown. Remember Brown?"

Lovell remembered Brown. Brown had once blazed away at his private car with a Winchester.

"He keeps a newspaper picture of you hanging beneath his rifle," concluded Dennison.

As for bribes, when Lovell made a cheque for five thousand dollars and offered it to Dennison, on condition the latter get him out of here, he himself didn't feel it was anything more than a bit of paper. Dennison didn't even glance at it, but he turned white.

"If I thought you knew any better, I'd knock you down for that!" he choked. "You owe me something, but you can't pay me now with your rotten money. You're going to pay with the sweat of your fat body. Do you hear, Lovell? You're going to learn what it costs some of us to make a home, and what it costs us to raise wheat."

He paused for breath. Lovell watched him in silence.

"You haven't money to pay even for this," Dennison went on. "It doesn't look like much, but there's something of me in every square foot you see. I reckon it's that which makes what people call 'home.'"

He looked as though about to strike. Then the girl appeared, and he fell back a step. It was almost dusk now.

"She can have the shack to-night," he concluded in his normal voice.

But the Lady Alice refused flat-footed to accept any favours; she would sleep by the side of her father.

"All right," Dennison agreed. "But I didn't mean it for a favour; I was only doing

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by you what I'd do by any kind of woman-folk. It will be handier for you in cooking the grub."

Lady Alice raised her blue eyes to his and smiled with a little curl of her lip. He saw. He could have seen that face in the dark. But this was her wickedest weapon. With it she suggested her contempt without expressing sufficient interest to involve her temper. Dennison flushed. He turned away.

Dennison ate cold corn-bread for supper that night; the others ate nothing. Lovell stamped around, shook his fists, made wild threats, and in the end sat down livid and panting for breath. Lady Alice tried to calm him, but she had all she could do to calm herself. She had never before been treated as one of the "women-folk." The experience was new to her, and she found herself studying the situation with some interest. Whenever it was possible to do so unobserved, she watched this big, dark man. Aside from the fact that he was a brute, there was something impressive about him. Try as she might, she couldn't, to herself, treat him with the contempt she felt he deserved. She was conscious of his power; she knew he wasn't afraid of her.

Dennison did not again refer to her occupancy of the cabin, but when it became obvious that she would not accept his invitation, he turned in and slept soundly. The others sat up most of the hot night and nursed their wrath.

Dennison rose at daybreak. He lighted the fire, cooked a corn-cake and fried some pork scraps. He ate by himself, and, after washing his dishes, came out with his axe over his shoulder. He found the three in a huddled group back of the cabin.

"If you want to work to-day," he said, "we'll put on an addition with three more bunks."

Lovell staggered to his feet.

"Look here, Dennison," he exploded, "this has gone far enough."

"It hasn't begun yet," answered Dennison.

"You brute," cried Lovell, "do you want to kill my girl?"

"Father," protested Lady Alice, "I forbid you to plead for me."

She spoke indignantly. Lovell placed his arm about her. Dennison caught his breath. She was very beautiful—quite the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.

"No," answered Dennison, "I don't mean her harm. But she ought to do the cooking."

"She shan't!" stormed Lovell. "Take her board out of my work."

"You can't more'n earn your own grub," answered Dennison. "You'd better come along. She'll find everything she needs in the shack."

He led off towards the forest. Lovell hesitated, and Jean waited to take his cue from his master.

"You'd better go, dad," advised Lady Alice.

White about the lips, Lovell followed.

By noon they had constructed the frame-work of the addition and cut the timber for three bunks. Dennison did most of the work, but, so far as they had the strength, the other two men fetched and carried. Lady Alice sat on the door-sill and watched them. Her face was as hard as marble, but her eyes looked worried. There was nothing in all her past but that made this situation very difficult for her to handle. As "Lady Alice" she was justified in sitting there, but, as one of the women-folks, she felt half ashamed of herself. Here were three men—one of them very tall and very dark—toiling in the sultry heat, pitting their man-strength against the primeval forest. There was something in this which gave her a new conception of the duties of her sex.

At noon the three returned, and Dennison asked if grub were ready. Lady Alice did not answer, but her cheeks turned a deep crimson. He stepped past her into the cabin and found nothing ready. He placed upon the table some cold corn-bread and coffee. Then he asked the two men in. Lovell, faint and weak, hurried past his daughter; but, when he was served, he took his plate back to her.

"No," said Dennison, "you can't do that. You won't be able to work if you don't eat."

In helpless rage, Lovell flung the food across the room.

"*Sacré!*" exploded Jean, staggering to his feet. "She shall have mine."

"Sit down!" Dennison commanded.

Jean obeyed, and, unable to resist further, devoured the corn-cake like a hungry dog.

Dennison and Jean finished the shack alone. They had no sooner thrown down their tools than Lovell, too weak to stand, rolled into one of the bunks with his head in his hands. Dennison came into the cabin, lighted a fire, and, taking down a large tin pan, proceeded to mix more corn-cake. He had hardly begun before he saw the girl's figure in the doorway. She tottered towards him.

"I would do that," she faltered—"I would do that, for father's sake, if—if I knew how."

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"You don't know how to cook?" he exclaimed.

"No," she answered.

He studied her a moment. She seemed scarcely able to keep her feet. He felt like a brute. He had asked her to do an impossible thing. She looked very weak, and Dennison had a big man's tenderness for weakness. He wanted to ask her to sit down; he would have liked to steady her to a chair.

"Shall I show you how?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered in a whisper.

In giving his instructions, he was gentle and courteous. He was genuinely anxious for her to learn. She listened in silence and obeyed to the letter. He sliced and fried the bacon himself while the corn-cake was in the oven. Then he set the table, and, when all was ready, called in the men. In silence the four ate their dinner.

It was obvious that the girl must now have the privacy of the cabin. She consented. But, before she retired, Lovell took her in his arms.

"He'll pay—he'll pay big for this some day!" he whispered hoarsely.

The next morning Dennison and Jean returned to the machine and toted Lady Alice's motor trunk back to the cabin.

III.

THREE weeks later, at the end of a sultry day, Dennison came back from the near-by spring with a bucket of water, and found Lovell and Jean stretched out in their bunks exhausted, while Lady Alice was still at work washing the supper dishes. The day had been particularly hot and oppressive. The girl showed the effects of it in her listless movements. The sun had gone behind the hills, looking like a copper plate, and the dusk brought no cooling breeze. He was about to leave, when he caught sight of her wan face, and paused. She glanced up in surprise.

"You are tired?" he asked.

All day long she had heard the chock of his axe, yet now he looked as strong as he had at dawn. His mere stalwart presence seemed to revive her. She answered hesitatingly, as though it were a confession of which she felt ashamed; he forced her always to tell the naked truth.

"Yes."

He picked up a chair and placed it by the open door.

"Sit down," he said; "I'll finish the work."

Lady Alice stared at him. There was a wonderfully deep and sincere tenderness expressed in his rough speech. She recalled plenty of prettier, more passionate utterances—many of them—but none which, out of sheer pity for herself, made her feel so much like crying. She tried to rouse herself, but he stood there quietly until she took her seat. She knew that she ought to go out and find her father, but she did not move.

"I forget that you aren't used to this," he said.

She looked up.

"I guess it's because I think of you as like my mother," he added.

She turned away her head, but the colour flooded back to her cheeks. Leaning forward, with her hands clasped over her knees, she looked out across the bit of clearing to the sombre fringe of trees. She wished to resent this personal turn to his speech, but one could not reply bitterly to so direct and simple a statement as that. She found herself unable to answer at all. The clatter of the dishes behind her continued for a moment, and then she saw her father approach. She rose instantly and turned back to her work. The vision she had seen for a moment among the trees vanished. She was once again merely "Lady Alice."

"I will finish the work myself," she said.

Day by day the clearing grew. Day by day the smoke thickened. A peculiar stillness rested above the trees. Squirrels ceased their chattering, birds their twittering. Dennison noted these signs and prayed for rain. The preceding Sunday, when he had gone to Brown's for provisions, he had talked with Darbitt, of the Forest Rangers. The latter had assured him that the fires now burning three hundred miles away were well hemmed in with trenches. Dennison would not have given a second thought to them if it had not been that he had heard Lady Alice coughing a good deal.

There was still, however, one more acre to be cleared, and he couldn't do it alone. With grim determination he redoubled his efforts, and drove Jean and Lovell to the point of exhaustion.

The girl studied the growing hate in her father's eyes with a new fear—a fear that was not for her father alone.

IV.

ON the evening of August 20, night came at two o'clock in the afternoon. The smoke blew on the wings of a light breeze, which at first seemed like the forerunner of rain. Then the wind stiffened, but the moving air

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"'Lie down, both of you!' Dennison commanded."

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was not cool; it was as hot as any that blows over the Sahara, and it was heavy-laden with pungent, biting smoke. Dennison threw aside his axe and ordered the men back to the cabin.

"I don't like the feel of this," he said abruptly.

"What's the trouble?" demanded Lovell.

"I'm afraid the fires have jumped the trenches," answered Dennison.

"Then what, in Heaven's name, are you standing here for?" demanded Lovell.

"Because we have five acres of clearing around us, and are within reach of a spring."

"And you expect us to stand here and be roasted alive?" cried Lovell.

"This is our best chance," answered Dennison.

"With the road out there?" shrieked Lovell.

He called his daughter. She staggered out of the cabin, half blind with smoke. He took her arm and dragged her towards the highway. Jean followed. Within the last hour the sky had become covered as though with the densest thunder-clouds. The wind had increased to a hurricane. The distant roar sounded like the unbroken warning cry from ten thousand throats. Dennison ran after them.

"The girl shan't go!" he cried. "It means death! Your only chance is here."

Still Lovell stumbled on with the frenzy of a single idea. He must get as far away as possible from the demon of smoke and the fire, which came leaping on at the rate of seventy miles an hour. Dennison found the girl and grasped her arm. He bent his lips to her ear.

"You mustn't go," he shouted—"I can't let you go!"

She did not struggle. She was bewildered, but the feel of his strong arm gave her new courage. He seemed the only stable thing in the world suddenly grown chaotic.

"I know," she choked, "but daddy——"

"Follow me," he broke in; "keep hold of my arm."

She seized his sleeve, and he, with the other hand, grasped Lovell by the collar. He dragged him to the centre of the clearing, then he dropped the man and turned to the girl, placing his strong hand on her shoulder.

"I must go for water," he said. "You promise to wait here for me?"

"Yes," she answered.

"Lie down and keep your mouth close to the ground; the air is fresher there."

She sank to her knees, and he disappeared. It seemed to her an eternity before he returned. He had two buckets of water. She knew nothing of his stumbling fight to the cabin, to the spring, and back, through the blinding smoke, to her. But she heard his heavy breathing before she saw him, and sank from a kneeling posture flat to the ground in relief. He stopped beside her.

"I'm going to throw this water over you," he panted. "Don't be frightened."

"A drink," shouted Jean—"give me a drink!"

He scrambled on all fours towards the buckets. Dennison brushed him back.

"Later," he said.

Very gently he poured the water over her hair and face, and then drenched her clothes. It refreshed her like a clean breeze from Heaven. He moistened her handkerchief, and bade her keep this over nose and mouth. Then he rose and started off again.

"You aren't going?" she pleaded.

"More water, while I can," he answered.

It took him twice as long to make this second trip. He doused both Lovell and Jean, and gave them each a long, deep drink. Then once more he started for the spring.

Lady Alice rose to her knees. "Don't go!" she choked. She clutched at his trousers' leg.

"There isn't much time," he panted.

He couldn't move with her hand detaining him. The tug of her fingers at his ankle went to his head like wine. For a second he lost consciousness of everything else but the one fact that, at this supreme moment, she wished him there by her side. He could have faced death quite cheerfully so. But death was not for her; she must live if the whole universe perished. Very gently he tried to loosen her fingers.

She tightened her grip. "No, no!" she sobbed.

She spoke in words naked and unashamed. When he left, she was alone. That was all she knew. Even there, by the side of her father, she was alone in a world grown terrible.

Dennison knelt beside her.

"I must go," he said, "but I'll come back."

He grasped her hand. She curled her fingers about his as unconsciously as a child when finding a hand in the dark.

"I'd fight my way through hell to get back!" he said.

Then he broke away and plunged again into the acrid fog.

The tidal wave of flame swept on, leaping

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chasms a mile wide, singeing whole mountains with its breath. It roared and whistled and shrieked in an orgy of devastation. The black clouds overhead flashed at times into ghastly luridness, pierced by zipping tongues of flame as sharp as lightning flashes. The elements had gone mad, and were striking the earth as though it were again a molten planet.

When Dennison staggered back from his third trip, a burning tree fell at his heels as he cleared the forest edge. Jean was burrowing his hot face into the sod with whimpering cries. Lovell was facing the heat with lips drawn back, trying as much as possible to shield the girl behind him. She was on her knees.

"Lie down, both of you!" Dennison commanded.

He threw a handful of the precious water into Lovell's face; then, falling prone himself, he splashed the hair of Lady Alice. He removed his shirt and, soaking it, covered her head with it. The heat struck his naked skin with a sting that felt like the cut of a hundred leathern lashes; the hot air pierced his lungs like acid flames.

On three sides now the trees fell crashing about them, charred to their heart in a single breath. The wind sped the sparks like white-hot steel bullets. Five feet above their heads a man could not have breathed and lived. As it was, Dennison thought the end had come. He moved closer to the girl; he bent his dry lips close to her ear.

"Don't speak!" he gasped. "Heaven forgive me! My hate brought this to you."

Without lifting his head, he found the bucket with a groping hand. The water was lukewarm. He poured more of it over the blanket.

"Don't answer me," he said, "but before the end I must tell you."

It was difficult for him to enunciate. His tongue was beginning to swell; each word was at the cost of a biting inhalation of burning air. His dry lips almost brushed the tip of her ear.

"If God has mercy, and lets you go," he panted, "then—for me—this has all been worth while—just being near you—just loving you!"

His head fell. He pressed his nostrils into the ground in search of coolness. Then, with what water remained, he moistened her handkerchief. He placed it against her mouth. As he did so, he felt her lips brush the back of his hand. He held his breath and waited. It might have been only an accident. But the lips remained. Then her fingers sought his.

Over his head the hot winds blew. He did not feel them. Against the skin of his naked back a million hot needles pressed. He did not feel them. The sky was lurid with hideous flames. To him it was the rose-red of the sunrise. Within a hundred yards of him the stumps in the open field were ablaze. It did not matter. With the confidence of one who trusts utterly, she clung to his fingers; with the passionate tenderness of one who loves endlessly, she pressed her lips against his hand.

The roaring hurricane swept over and beyond. Across the road it sprang, and down the road, and on. The tempestuous howl subsided into a crackling chatter. Then came brief puffs of cool wind—not many, just a single breath or two. But in a few minutes another came and blew off the lower gases. The blazing trees were still around them, but the flames now went straight up.

For an hour longer they waited there, scarcely daring to believe that the demon had really passed.

Then Dennison whispered to her by his side—

"God has been very good to us."

Lovell raised his head and tried to speak. He couldn't—his lips were too dry. Dennison caught the pleading look in the man's eye, and, rising, seized his pails again. His path lay this time over hot coals and beneath burning branches, but he reached the spring. Deep from the bowels of the earth it was still bubbling up. He drank, filled his pails, and staggered back. One pail he handed to Lovell, who buried his head in it, until Jean, crawling up, fought him off. With the other pail, Dennison knelt by the side of the girl and again bathed her hair and face. She marvelled at his tenderness and at the eager look in his eyes.

But Lovell marvelled, rather, at the tenderness in the eyes of Lady Alice. He had never before seen anything like it there. It reminded him of the way his wife had looked at him when Lady Alice was born; and here, where neither railroads, nor money, nor title counted, it did not greatly surprise him. Facing this big, dark man, with his blistered back and his strong arms, he felt something of it himself.

With dripping hair and swollen eyes, Lovell crept nearer the two.

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"What are we going to do now, Dennison?" he panted.

Dennison smiled. Standing there in the midst of this hot, charred world, he smiled.

"Darbitt of the Rangers will find us to-morrow," he said. "Then—then you will go back home, and I will begin all over again."

Lady Alice lifted her head.

"And I?" she asked.

For a moment Lovell blinked at his daughter. In the last few hours this crisis had stripped his own world of all its tawdry trappings, leaving only, as the fire had left, such things as were bed-rock. And among the latter stood out love and courage and tenderness and self-sacrifice. He groped for Dennison's hand.

"I guess we'll all begin over again," he said.

THE WOODPECKER.

DID you hear? 'Tis the yaffle; how he cries
Ha ha! ha ha! and away he flies;
A twinkle of red and a flash of green,
Just all of himself that he lets be seen!

Did you see him? There—in that tree, you say.
Ha ha! ha ha! He is yards away;
"Catch me who can!" is his constant cry,
"And where is the bird so merry as I?

"The thrush may trill and the blackbird troll;
I am the bird of the whimsical soul;
The Puck of the tribe, a spirit of fun,
I chuckle or ever the day's begun."

The pine wood is dark as dark can be;
You peer through the gloom—what is that you see?
Ha ha! The elf—how he makes you start,
And mocks, the knave, at your beating heart!

In the prime of morn, when you're scarce awake,
On a sudden you'll hear his laughter break
Right in at your window—be gay! be gay!—
He'll put you in humour the livelong day.

Is the world ever dull? The yaffle's glee
Is enough for two, is enough for three;
Laugh one, laugh all! let the heartening shout
Spin the slow wheels of the world about.

L. E. UPCOTT.

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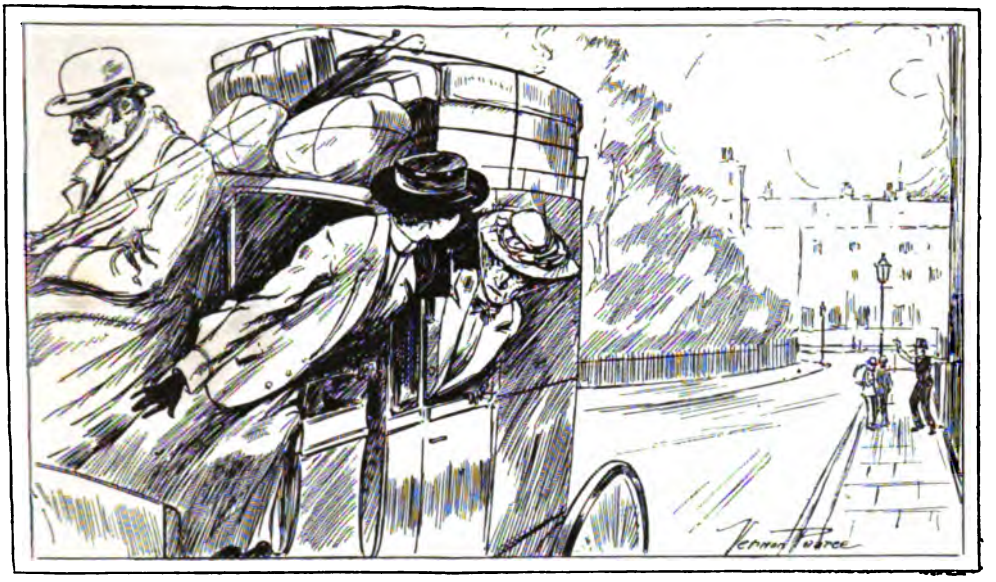

AT THE LAST MOMENT.

MISTRESS: You're sure we haven't forgotten anything, Maria?
MAID: No, mum. There's the two large boxes, the two parcels, and—— Oh, mum, *we've forgotten the master!*

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

THE man who likes to hear himself talk always has an appreciative audience.

PARKE: I don't know what I am ever going to do with that boy of mine. He is careless and absolutely reckless of consequences, and doesn't seem to care for anyone.
LANE: Good! You can make a chauffeur out of him.

WIFE: What do you mean by telling Mrs. Jones's husband you never ask my advice about anything?
HUSBAND: Well, my dear, I don't; you don't wait to be asked.

FIRST BOY: These motoring toffs never give a feller a ride.
SECOND BOY: Oh, some of 'em do—if they run over you.

TRAVELLER (at country hotel): Anybody here who plays poker?
MANAGER: Plenty of 'em, if you don't mind lending 'em a few shillings to start with.

LAWYER (to prisoner): Well, so you want me to defend you. Have you any money?
PRISONER: No, but I've got a pony, and a few chickens, and a pig or two.
LAWYER: Now, let's see, what do they accuse you of stealing?
PRISONER: Oh, a pony, and a few chickens, and a pig or two.

YOUNG BARRISTER: I haven't lost a case yet.
FRIEND: Oh, you'll get a client some day.

FRIENDLY CRITIC: This will never do. You must make your characters true to life. Why, man, in your description of the scene at the Dorcas Club, you say, "For some minutes they sewed in silence"!

Too many people mistake connected words for connected thought.

WILLIE: Papa, is it necessary to whip me?
PARENT (grimly): You ought to know.
WILLIE: Well, I sometimes think you don't realise how little good it does me.

A WAY THEY HAVE AT THE SEASIDE.

VISITOR: What do I owe you for yesterday's trip?
BOATMAN: Well, sir, I'd sooner be taking the three-an'-six you'd be offering me than the two shillings I'd be asking of you.

THE CRY OF THE CLERK.

A Love Letter.

Lady, that I this letter write
Argues me absent from thy sight,
Which by love's logic argues me
Absented from felicity.
What use for profitless pretence?
No orator's magniloquence,
No scientist with false precision,
No lawyer, no metaphysician,
No poet's rapture e'er will prove
That life is life without my love.
Therefore, dear lady, 'tis but vain
To pray me to repress my pain;
As soon beseech the stricken hart
Forget the venom of the dart
In her fair side, as soon implore
The storm-vexed ocean toss no more,
As beg me uncomplaining be,
Alone, apart, afar from thee.
Yet by my grief I would not grieve
Thy spirit; do but thou believe
This protestation doth profess
My love and not my loneliness,
My heart's devotion, not despair,
Not that I die, but thou art fair.
Return then, soon; a city clerk,
Chained to my desk from dawn to dark,
I cannot follow thee afar
Where thou and thy companions are,
Beside (or in) the summer sea;
Oh, soon return to town and me,
And salve at last, thy pastimes over,
The bitter smart of thy true lover.

Edgar Vine Hall.

"How does she manage to get so many people interested in the Suffragette question?"
"She addresses the eighty-year-old members of the audience as 'Girls.'"

SPENDTHRIFTS rush in where rich men fear to tread.

HUSBAND: Since you went to the polls to vote, why didn't you do it?
ENFRANCHISED WIFE: Another lady was using the voting booth.

VICAR: Begin at the bottom and work up, Patrick—that is the only way.
PARISHIONER: It can't be done in my business—I'm a well-digger.

TEACHER: The Thames flows into the sea. That is its mouth. Now, where is its source?
PUPIL: At the other end.

THE ONLY WAY.

"I BELIEVE you've had a bite out of every cake, Ethel, and I told you only to take one of your favourite ones."
"Yes, mummy, but I had to taste them all, to see which was my favourite one."

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A MAN who had a sincere love for real art was talking at one of the clubs, the other evening, on what he classed as "scamped" work—so-called impressionistic pictures that were merely rough and hurried sketches, and so-called portraits that bore no true likeness to their originals.

"'And, of course,' said the man, 'you know who it is?'

"'Oh, of course I do, sor,' quickly responded the cook. 'Of course, of course!' As she said this, she drew closer and closer to the picture, studying it more intently. 'Of course, sor,' she added, 'it's you — or the mistress!'"

OVERHEARD AT THE ZOO.

FATHER: Yes, Tommy, men go to all manner of places collecting Birds of Paradise.
TOMMY: But, father, don't you think the man that collected these was rather silly to come back to earth?

"As an instance," said he, "I know a man who had his portrait painted last year. It cost him a thousand pounds, and he was very proud of it. When it came, he showed it to the cook.

"'Well, Mary,' said he, 'how do you like this portrait?'

"'Sure, sor,' beamed the cook, with true Irish loyalty, 'it's lovely. It's certainly beautiful. It's more than that, sor—it's divine!'

HE: I never loved any girl so much in my life.
SHE (reproachfully): But don't you think, darling, that you will be able to love me more later on?

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A SORE POINT.

WORKMAN: Aye, sir, pore old Bill, 'e were killed by a circular saw. 'E was a fine, strong chap, so 'e were, and as good a Christian man as ever I see, but of *wery limited hinformation regarding circular saws!*

A SUMMER PROPOSAL.

A rose-wreathed hat,
A hammock swaying,
From flaxen plait
A ringlet straying.

A maiden slim
—Last year a flapper—
She thinks of him,
White-ducked and dapper,

Who smokes a pipe
In silence near her.
The time is ripe—
Why should he fear her?

His colour scheme
In socks and ties
Is quite a dream,
And yet he sighs,

But not from pain
Or indigestion,
He tries in vain
To pop the question.

A method grand
To him occurs—
To place his hand
On top of hers.

'Tis done! And next
His course is this—
As she's not vexed,
To steal a kiss.

In language mixed—
No time for thinking—
The thing is fixed
As quick as winking!

The sunbeams gild
The distant ridges,
With joy life's filled—
But oh, the midges!

Jessie Pope.

IN the new technical class at a certain school a boy refused to sew, thinking it below the dignity of a man of ten years.

"Why," said the teacher, "George Washington did his own sewing in the war, and do you think you are superior to George Washington?"

"I don't know," replied the boy seriously; "only time can tell that."

HE (anxiously): About how long, darling, will it take to complete your trousseau?

SHE: All the rest of my married life, I hope.

A LUCKY ESCAPE.

"I UNDERSTAND there were loud calls of 'Author!' after the play was done."

"Yes, but the mob didn't catch him."

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"THEIR ONLY HARVEST." BY COLIN HUNTER, R.A.

Reproduced from the original purchased for the Nation by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest and now hung in the National Gallery of British Art, Millbank, S.W.

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"THREE FISHERS." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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THE ART OF COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

BY R. C. TRAFFORD.

COLIN HUNTER was born at Glasgow in 1841, but the scene of his upbringing was Helensburgh, the favourite watering-place of Dumbartonshire, at the mouth of the Gareloch, a branch of the Clyde, across which Greenock is about four miles distant. Hither, in his early years, came his parents, John Hunter and his wife, who had been a Miss Macarthur, of Inveraray. John Hunter was a man of marked poetic temperament and powers, who, through failing health, had given up the strain of business life in Glasgow, and found occupation in light duties connected with the borough of Helensburgh. And here the boy learnt that love of the landscape of his own country which contributed in after years so largely to success in his profession. Helensburgh is naturally very proud of the celebrity reached by the man whose youth was passed, and his education acquired, within its boundaries.

At sixteen, Colin Hunter was placed in the office of a Glasgow shipping house, where he helped to keep the books, and was sent occasionally on board the firm's ships. Seeing but few prospects of advancement ahead of him, he turned over in his practical Scots brain the question of remaining in a subordinate position in a firm in which there was little likelihood of his ever being anything but a clerk, and following a career from which he derived little gratification, and presently came to wonder whether it would not be better, even if he were to remain obscure, to spend his time in following the profession of painter, which he had already learned to love. For during the four years of his clerical work he had, in each Friday to Monday's freedom from it, spent the chief of his time in sketching. On these occasions he frequently walked the twenty-four miles from Glasgow to Helensburgh, to visit his parents and do some painting either at home with them or at some point upon his journey.

Some little knowledge of drawing he had learnt in his school-days from a Mr. J. B. Allen, who had formed a drawing-class, which the boy attended, and of which, in an informal way, he became almost the second master, so excellent was his judgment and so true his eye on the work submitted to his criticism by his fellow-students. Some few hints as to the use of paint he had

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also picked up from a landscape-painter, Milne Donald, who used on his holidays to encourage him to accompany him on sketching expeditions.

But when Colin Hunter shook off the dust of commerce to follow the profession of art, he had, as yet, had practically no training in it. His parents were in no position to arrange for him any special facilities which might develop his talent, and they disapproved very strongly of his step, being influenced, no doubt, in this by some advice given to the boy by the President of the Royal Scotch Academy, Sir George Harvey, with regard to the precariousness of art as a profession. But industry, frugality, and

"THEIR SHARE OF THE TOIL." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

talent companioned him, and, although he was thrown entirely on his own resources for the means of livelihood, he was, from the first, able to justify his decision.

Armed with easel and paint-box, Colin Hunter wandered amid the lochs and hills of the Western Highlands, and, modest in his ambitions, sold landscapes for a few sovereigns, here and there, as he found purchasers. By the end of a year he had made a hundred pounds, enjoyed twelve months of frugal pleasure, and justified his ambition to be ranked as a painter.

After studying in Glasgow and Edinburgh, he found himself, when he was twenty-six, master of sufficient capital to warrant a visit to Paris. There, accordingly, he went, and set to work in the studio of M. Bonnat, the artist, himself educated in Spain, who, with much success, instilled realism into many young painters. The work Colin Hunter did in the land of multiplied consciousness stimulated his judgment and his taste. A capable craftsman even in those early days, he benefited very largely by the instruction which influenced, though it failed to guide, his work. For his art revealed always that individualism which prevents his being bracketed with the members of any particular school.

Technique is a matter of individual choice. Were it not so, there would be but one uniform method of laying on paint: and although Colin Hunter adhered to his own, it is not likely that he would, without his Paris training, so quickly have acquired the power to deal broadly with impressions of natural appearances, with weather of all kinds, with distance, with atmosphere.

He early saw that London must be his headquarters, and he settled there in 1872, a year before his marriage with Miss Isabella Rattray Young, daughter of Mr. John Young, of Glasgow. In London he either continued or began many close friendships with such men as Orchardson, Pettie, Tom Graham, William Black, MacWhirter, and others of the band of famous Scotsmen who came to win their laurels in the south. Two of the closest of these friends, William Black and

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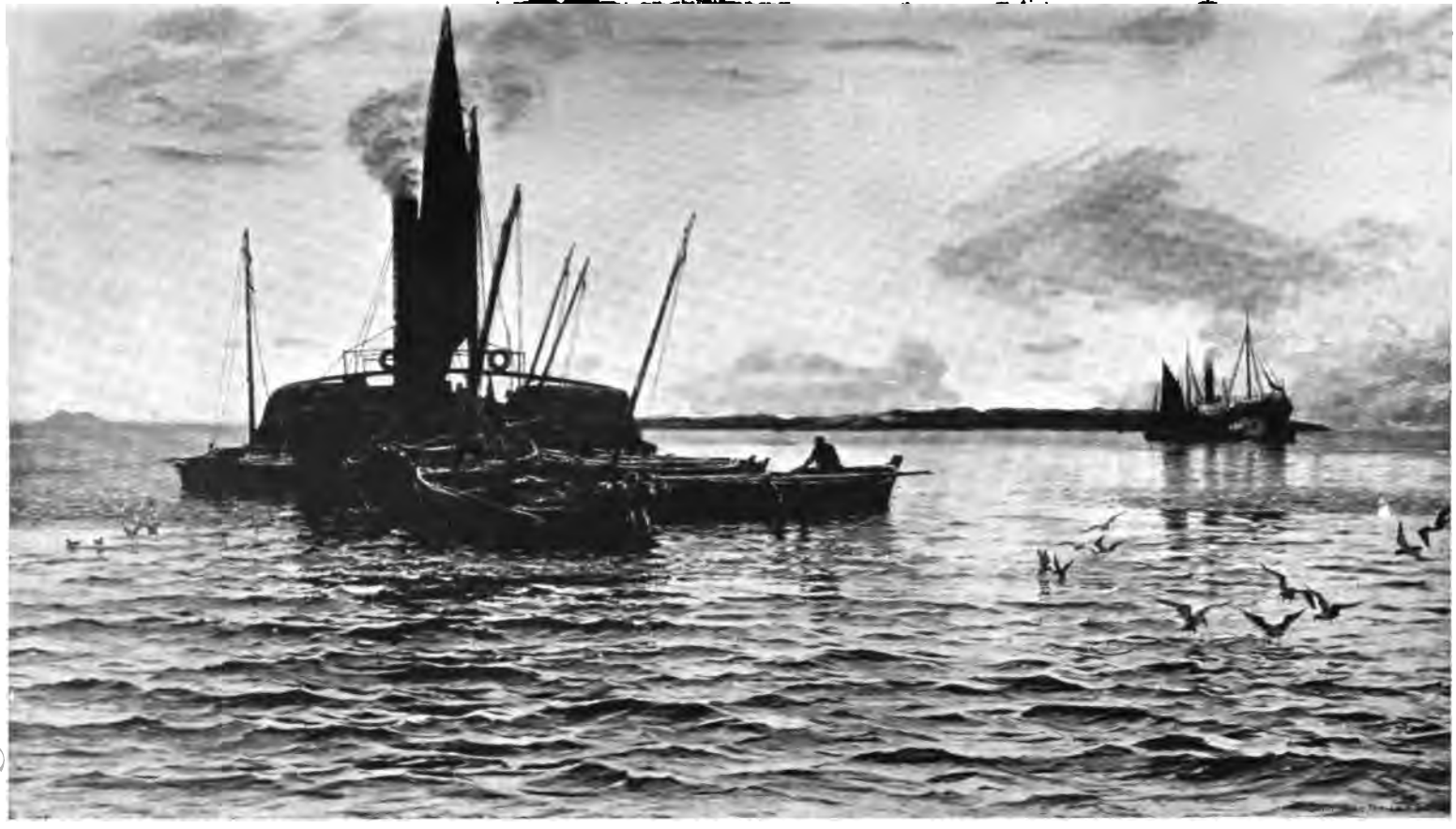

"THE HERRING MARKET AT SEA." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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"LONDON FROM THE TOWER BRIDGE." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

Sir Robert Giffen, came southward at exactly the same date as Colin Hunter himself. To the last, however, Scotland claimed him for the summer and autumn, when he was able to combine with his work his love of sport, for he excelled as a shot, angler, and yachtsman.

"Taking in the Nets," his first picture exhibited in the Academy, the year following his Paris sojourn, shows a notable advance in Colin Hunter's art; and although prior to this the Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts had held many pictures of his, this was the first to attract general attention to his talent; indeed, after this he did nothing that was not anxiously looked for, closely scrutinised, and praised. His talent, in fact, now suddenly received recognition, as it was seen that he was equipped in the greater part of the technique of his profession in this his first important work.

To a remarkably individual extent Colin Hunter broke away from the accepted types of marine painting, and invented his own manner to suit his themes as he saw them. In his case, even more than in that of any of his contemporaries in paint, "the man was the style." Method should suit subject, and the broad, sketchy style, the great freedom of handling he employed, were far better suited to his themes than would have been either the minuteness of treatment of a Meissonier or the delicacy of colour of a Corot. His own method gave to his work a realism as forcible as it was thoughtful and true. For he was observant and conscientious in his art, had a rare facility of hand, and was truthful in his delineation of effect. If his possibilities now and then appeared to exceed his accomplishment, this argues not that the accomplishment was not great, but that the possibilities were prodigious.

The first condition of a picture is its æsthetic charm, then comes technical perfection, and lastly the truth of the sentiment or history which the artist intended to convey. Æsthetic charm is an indefinite quality, and a large number of people found it in Colin Hunter's pictures. His technical equipment was, as we have said, very early mastered, and the story he

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"THE BURIAL OF THE MACDONALDS OF GLENCOE." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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"CHANGING PASTURE." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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"NIAGARA RAPIDS." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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portrays, which deals chiefly with the life of fisher-folk, is always graphic, convincing, and charged with deep feeling.

His pictures have a distinction which is a good illustration of the truth of the saying that "things are only common when we look at them in a common way," and a proof that the artist is able to make every episode subservient to his art, and that even such trivial events as mussel-gathering become interesting when, heated with poetic fire, they are transfused and new-wrought in the crucible of his painter's mind.

No pictures are so pleasing to the majority of people as those which illustrate some view of Nature with which they like to consider themselves familiar, and in many of his pictures Colin Hunter passed beyond the accidental and sought to express the common —the universal struggle for existence. He

"THE FALLS OF NIAGARA." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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"THE POOL IN THE WOOD, HELMSDALE." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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"SIGNS OF HERRING." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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did this at first not perhaps by intention, but unconsciously, because it was this side of life which appealed to him. The seas were as roads, and he traversed them with, as it were, a reverent familiarity. He showed them sensitive and tender, moved with delicate malice, or under the raw fury of wrath. He took us out upon the calmly breathing waves, while we seemed to hold the sheet in our own hand; and we went down with him into the trough of the sea or flew before the warm south wind which filled the sails; and, as a result, Fortune's favours, which are ordinarily as scarce as are white crows, were showered upon him. He ploughed the waters and he reaped, deservedly, a large harvest.

Photo by] [*Dixon & Son.*

COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

In the course of his long series of pictures of human traffic upon the great waters that are about the earth, Colin Hunter gave us many graphic pictures which portray the use of nets. Thus we have "Barking the Nets," "Salmon Stake Nets," "Tanning the Nets," "Tarring the Nets," "Taking in the Nets," "Poling the Nets," "Shaking the Nets," and, in his "Salmon Fishing on the Dee, Kirkcudbright," the use of the shoulder-nets. And in many others of his pictures, such as "The Herring Market at Sea," "Landing Haddock," "Herring Fishing Off Kildonan Castle, Isle of Arran," "Fishers of the North Sea," "Herring Trawlers," "The Silver of the Sea," "Trawlers Waiting for Darkness," "Daybreak: Digging for Bait," "The Gleanings of the Herring Market," "Their Share of the Toil," "Three Fishers," "Atlantic Islands," we see revealed and epitomised some phase of the arduous lives led by those who gain their living from the sea. Had it been Mr. Colin Hunter's aspiration to be in paint the poet laureate of this dangerous labour, he would have had his hour of triumph, for it is with these pictures that he reached his greatest height of popularity. And the reason for this popularity is not far to seek, for he showed us the intimate relation of men with the dangers of the sea, and he found and transferred to his canvas the real sentiment of this phase of life by living much among the fisher-folk themselves and sharing their joys and sorrows by means of

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"WET SANDS." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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a sympathetic insight inseparable from his vision of their lives. And the pathos of those toilful lives as realised in his pictures is all the more poignant for the very restraint and dignity with which it is expressed, even in those pictures which make the most direct appeal to the sympathies of the onlooker.

His "Waiting for the Tide," "Ireland," "Lobster Fishers," "Iona," "Changing Pastures," "Iona Crofters," "Reflections," "Mussel Gatherers," presented by Mr. Schwabe to the city of Hamburg, "Baiters," and "The Lass that Baits the Line"—all these deal with the shore-life of the same folk. One reason for his pictures' popularity was that, excepting in a few cases, they appealed instantly to the public, needing no presupposed knowledge; and, modestly, he himself used to say that he owed much of his success to the interest which the public took in his subjects. Certainly, in "The Burial of the Macdonalds," sympathy with the picture is increased when we recall the account of the massacre of the clan by Campbell of Glenlyon at Glencoe, and the complicity in it of William III.; but the scene, as Colin Hunter painted it—the taking of the bodies across the gloomy loch by the few survivors of the clan, chiefly women—has in it an innate suggestion of tragedy. The pictures painted at Iona, too, gain something of interest when we recall that Columba, in 563, after leaving Ireland, entered the creek, now known as Port-a-Churraith, and founded, on this small island of the Hebrides, his monastery, within the precincts of which he was afterwards buried. But, in general, the tales of toil which Colin Hunter's pictures tell are applicable to any coast or sea, although, with an inherent love of his native land, he found them chiefly in Skye, Sutherlandshire, Ross-shire, Arran, The Hebrides, Helmsdale, Scalloway, or on his dearly-loved shores of the Clyde. Now and then he went away from Scotland for subjects, as when he painted his picture of Niagara, his "London from the Tower Bridge," his "The 'Victory' Off Walmer Castle," and "Their Only Harvest," now in the National Gallery of British Art, which was painted on the West Coast of Ireland. Here we see the boat loaded with seaweed which, after being dried on the beach and converted into kelp, is sold for fuel at about two pounds the ton. "Gleanings of the Herring Harvest" is reminiscent of Scalloway, for, there, after the fleet of herring-boats has departed, the village fishers go over the waters with small nets and glean sometimes a whole winter's supply. "The Herring Market at Sea"—from the Exhibition of 1884, bought by the Corporation of

"TARBERT, LOCH FYNE." AN ETCHING BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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"IN THE GLOAMING." AN ETCHING BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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Manchester—was painted on Loch Fyne, where steamers follow the boats to their fishing-ground in order to take the fish whilst quite fresh to the Glasgow and Greenock markets. To paint this scene, Colin Hunter chartered an old tug, past active service, and used to go out as early as 4 a.m. to paint the scene of the sale of the fish, which begins at dawn. "Waiting for the Homeward Bound" was painted under similar conditions off Ailsa Craig, where tugs lie-to in readiness to tow incoming ships up the Clyde. Incidentally it is, perhaps, also of interest to note how exactly he knew every kind of fish represented in the phases of life depicted in his pictures. The herring, the salmon, the haddock, the lobster, and others of the fish world were as clearly understood by him as the waters in which they lived and moved.

One artist's opinion on the work of a fellow-artist is always of value, and we may therefore quote that of Sir Hubert von Herkomer, R.A., on the art of Colin Hunter, from the fourth in a series of articles, entitled: "Notes on Landscape-Painting," which, some twenty-four years ago, he contributed to *The Portfolio*. This special article dealt chiefly with Mr. Hunter's power as an etcher, and the critic takes the etching of "Shaking the Nets"—a picture exhibited in the Academy of the current year—and says of it: "We are not at all surprised to learn that Mr. Hunter has already, after but little practice, acquired a strong liking for the etching needle. 'I have applied myself to etching only recently,' he says, 'but have so much pleasure in it that on my return to London in the autumn I shall take it upagain.'

"The artist is already well known as a painter, and is one of the strong and vigorous members of the young Scottish school—a school which is not only full of rich promise for the future, but well established now on the only sound principle in art, the combination of hard study from Nature with artistic freedom in the use of knowledge and in the disposal of natural materials. It is evident at a glance that Mr. Hunter and his most able companions have observed much and know much; whilst, at the same time, they work without any painful slavery to minute detail.

"ATLANTIC WAVES." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

"The difference between any one of Mr. Hunter's pictures and a photograph is enormous; yet the picture, though broad in manner and neglectful of detail except when it is really significant, conveys to us more of the general impression of Nature than the photograph. Mr. Hunter's knowledge has been acquired in great part out of doors, where he works for six months every year, taking his large canvases with him."

In the last sentence Professor Herkomer touched the keynote of Colin Hunter's popularity, which was to be accounted for in his power to portray that intense love of Nature which was inherent in him.

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"LOWERING SAIL." AN ETCHING BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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The phrase "Celtic glamour" had not then been coined, but Colin Hunter, who was pre-eminently original in his perception of Nature, was the first artist to give to his pictures the feeling of that vast sadness associated so inseparably with the gloomy grandeur of the western coast and sea-lochs where so much of his work was done. As Mr. James L. Caw, in his book called "Scottish Painting, Past and Present," said of him, amongst many other things: "Hunter, however, possessed a quality of his own in which he was without a rival. This was a perception, not so much of the tragic sorrow as of the immemorial sadness of the sea which washes the Celtic fringes and sunset shores of these islands. His west coast pictures, painted in Scotland and Ireland, are instinct, as perhaps no others have ever been, with that brooding melancholy, half in love with sadness and wholly resigned to Fate, which is frequently spoken of as characteristic of Celtic sentiment."

Colin Hunter's work is well represented in our public galleries. The National Gallery of British Art contains his fine picture "Their Only Harvest," which shows us the gathering of seaweed off the Irish coast for fuel and for enriching the soil for agricultural purposes. The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, possesses his "The Pool in the Wood, Helmsdale," one of his few pictures of inland waters—for which his fishing interest was at least partly responsible—and the City Art Gallery of Manchester has his "The Herring Market at Sea." Bristol owns "The Flowing Tide," Preston, "Signs of Herring," Leicester, "Three Fishers." Somewhat inappropriately, however, it happens that the public collections in the artist's native country, which inspired his life-work, do not possess any of the more important of his works, a circumstance which one may hope to see improved upon some day by the purchase of any that may yet change hands. Meantime, Glasgow possesses five of his less important paintings—"Good Night to Skye," "The Falls of Niagara," "Niagara Rapids," "A Sea-piece: Dawn," and "The Ebbing Tide," and Aberdeen has the artist's portrait of himself. But Edinburgh has no work of his at all. In the Colonies, Sydney cherishes his "Salmon Stake Nets," Adelaide the fine picture "Waiting for the Homeward Bound," and the South African Art Gallery at Capetown "The Silver of the Sea." And it is of interest to note that the first-named of all these, purchased for the Nation by the Trustees of the Chantrey Bequest, hangs in the gallery at Millbank in close proximity to that beautiful decorative work of his son, Mr. J. Young Hunter, "My Lady's Garden," also secured for the Nation by the same authorities exactly twenty years after the purchase of "Their Only Harvest."

"A SEA-PIECE: DAWN." BY COLIN HUNTER, A.R.A.

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THE KIDNAPPER.

By BETH ELLIS,

Author of "The Moon of Bath," etc.

"OH, Bobbie, look at that man behind you! He has such a typical 'stage-villain' face."

Bobbie Mainwaring looked across at his sister and laughed.

"This is the three thousand and seventieth time, since you left home, that you have asked me to look at someone behind me. I don't carry eyes in the back of my head, and it isn't manners to turn round and stare at inoffensive strangers enjoying their dinner."

"They can't be enjoying their dinner," argued Lucetta. "No one could possibly enjoy dinner on a Spanish railway. But do look at him, Bobby. He has such a slimy sort of face, and the girl with him is lovely."

This last proved too much for Bobbie's "manners"; he threw a hasty glance over his shoulder at the couple behind him. He turned back to his dinner with a frown.

"Your study in physiognomy is justified for once, Luce; the man is a regular scoundrel. I met him out in Mexico; he called himself Pedro Fernandez then. Don't attract his attention; I don't want to renew the acquaintance."

"He's far too occupied with his companion to notice you. I wonder who she is? She looks such a child."

"Have some coffee?" suggested Bobbie soothingly.

"No, I'm too hot to eat or drink; this car is suffocating. Do ask the attendant, in your very best Spanish, how soon we shall stop; I want to go back to my carriage."

Bobbie dutifully inquired, and learned that the train would reach a station in a few minutes.

"So absurd to have the restaurant car separate from the corridor," grumbled Lucetta. "The villain's wife looks quite faint with the heat."

Fortunately, Lucetta had not long to wait; in five minutes the train came to a halt. She sprang eagerly to her feet.

"Here we are, Bobbie. Take me back to my carriage, and then you can come back and finish your dinner in peace."

They hurried to the door of the car. The night was very dark; there were no station lights visible.

"I don't think we've arrived," said Bobbie doubtfully.

"I expect the front of the train is in the station," cried Lucetta. "Come along."

They jumped down and began to walk up the train. It was very dark; they could not see far ahead. Bobbie helped his sister up into her carriage, and turned to walk back to the restaurant car. On his way he passed "the villain's wife," as Lucetta had dubbed Fernandez' companion. She had followed their example, and was walking along the railway track to her carriage. Bobbie made a mental note of her beauty as she passed.

Suddenly the train began to move ahead. At first he supposed it was drawing up into the station, but the speed increased, and he realised with a shock that it was not going to stop again. He caught at the door of the restaurant car as it passed him, and swung himself up on to the step. Then he heard a cry behind him, and, looking back, saw the girl he had just passed standing in the middle of the track, holding out despairing hands after the vanishing train.

Now, Bobbie always acted on impulse, and his impulses were invariably chivalrous. He had no interest in rescuing any friend of Fernandez, and he certainly had no desire to be stranded in the wilds of Spain, but he did not pause to weigh these considerations. He only knew that here was a girl in trouble, crying for help. Without a moment's hesitation he loosed his hold and sprang back on to the ground. The train whirled away into the darkness, and the man and the girl were left alone together, standing in the middle of the empty track, staring at one another in bewilderment.

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II.

THE girl was the first to speak.

"Oh, what has happened to the train?" she cried despairingly.

"I'm afraid we've missed it," said Bobbie weakly. And then the absurdity of the situation suddenly striking him, he began to laugh heartily.

His laughter was echoed rather doubtfully by his companion.

"But it will come back for us?" she said anxiously.

"I'm afraid not," answered Bobbie. "But, of course," he added quickly, noting her look of despair, "your husband will stop it and come back to look for you."

"My husband?" she said blankly.

"Don Fernandez."

"Oh, of course," she answered, flushing. "Only I do not think he knows I have been left behind; he was eating his dinner."

"Greedy hound!" muttered Bobbie to himself, but aloud he continued reassuringly: "As soon as he goes back to your sleeping car, he will make inquiries for you."

"But we are not sharing a carriage," she faltered. "You see, he is not my husband. We—we are to be married in Paris to-morrow."

"Good Heavens!" cried Bobbie. "I shouldn't do that, you know."

She stared at him in amazement. "Why not, pray?" she asked sharply.

Bobbie pulled himself up. "Well—er—you see—you—— Why, you're an American!" he cried, suddenly becoming conscious that the conversation was being carried on in his native tongue.

The girl laughed softly. "Is that a reason for not marrying?"

"For not marrying Fernandez," answered Bobbie promptly. "What are your people thinking about to allow it?"

"They don't know," she answered, and then stopped suddenly and bit her lip.

Bobbie eyed her in consternation.

"Do you mean to say you are running away with Fernandez?" he cried.

The girl stood a minute silent, her face slowly crimsoning, then she turned and began to walk rapidly along the railway track. "I do not think my affairs are any concern of yours," she said haughtily.

It was Bobbie's turn to look embarrassed. "I beg your pardon," he muttered remorsefully.

The girl made no answer, but continued to stumble hurriedly along. Bobbie pursued in silence, cursing himself for his tactlessness.

But as he walked humbly behind her, and noted her graceful figure, the clearness of her skin, the velvety softness of the little dark curls which strayed over the nape of her perfect neck, as he marked, above all, the exceeding youthfulness of her air, he became more and more convinced that to allow such a child to be trapped into marriage with Fernandez, without offering one word of warning, would be a cowardly desertion of a woman in her hour of need. For he had met Fernandez more than once, and knew that about him which marked him unfit mate for any woman.

He had no mind to risk another snub, but it was obviously impossible to make any impression upon the girl while he was condemned to pursue her breathlessly along a railway track. He drew abreast of her and broke the silence.

"Don't you think it is rather unnecessary for us to be rushing across Spain in this frightfully busy way? We shan't overtake the train, you know."

The girl turned and looked at him gravely, and when she looked at him, Bobbie became more than ever convinced that to permit such a girl to marry Fernandez would be madness.

"Who are you?" she asked bluntly.

"I don't think I am anyone in particular," answered Bobbie cheerfully. "My name is Mainwaring."

"But why are you here?" she persisted.

Bobbie grew embarrassed. "Well, you see, I—er—I saw you were being left behind, so I thought I had better join you. Spain is—er—rather a lonely country to walk about in at night, you see."

A little smile dimpled her cheeks. "But that is very kind of you," she said wonderingly.

"Oh, not at all," cried Bobby airily, as though it was a confirmed habit of his to spring out of trains and rescue belated damsels.

She shook her head with another little smile, and held out her hand. "My name is Dolores Lisson," she said simply, "and I do thank you for coming to take care of me."

Bobbie always jibbed at gratitude.

"Lisson!" he repeated hurriedly. "Are you any relation to Andrew Lisson, of New York?"

"He is my father."

"No? Really? That's splendid! I

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know him well. I dined with him only two months ago."

A wistful look crossed her face: "Darling dada!" she said softly. "It is six months since I saw him."

"Does he know you are going to be married?" asked Bobbie, seizing his opportunity.

"No," answered Dolores shortly, and the opportunity vanished.

Presently she stopped with a little cry of dismay: "Are there many hotels in Paris?" she asked anxiously.

"About a thousand or so."

"But—but how shall I let Don Fernandez know what has become of me?" she cried despairingly.

"What—you don't know his address?"

She shook her head. Bobbie chuckled inwardly. It cheered him greatly to picture the rage and bewilderment of Fernandez when he should find his bride had vanished. He felt it was not incumbent upon him to suggest the possibility of telegraphing to the station at Paris. He assumed an air of profound wisdom.

"The first place he will look for you will naturally be at your own home. You had better go back there and wait until you hear from him."

The effect of his words was unexpected. Dolores turned on him in a whirl of fury.

"I will *not* go back. They won't let me speak to him. My uncle threatened to have him arrested if he came near me. I won't go back—I won't!"

"Oh!" said Bobbie blankly. "That, at least, appears to be decided. But what are you going to do? Paris is a large city in which to hunt for anyone."

Dolores turned with an entrancing smile and held out her hands entreatingly.

"You'll find him for me, won't you?" she coaxed confidingly. "Please say you will."

"Not I," said Bobbie bluntly. "He is a fortune-hunting scoundrel, and you are well rid of him."

"Oh-h!" There was a world of reproach in her voice. Without a word of warning, she sank down on the bank by the side of the railway and burst into tears.

Bobbie knelt down beside her contritely.

"Please don't cry; I didn't mean to——"

"You couldn't have been more unkind to me if you had meant!" she sobbed. "How dare you talk like that of the man I'm going to marry?"

"But you are not going to marry him," coaxed Bobbie. "You are going to let me take you home, like a sensible child."

Dolores dried her eyes and drew herself up haughtily.

"Be so good as to leave me," she said coldly.

"Nonsense!" said Bobbie good-humouredly. "You can't stay here by yourself."

"I will go no further with you," said Dolores firmly.

"But we can't sit here for ever!"

Dolores made no answer, but gazed up at the heavens, her pretty red lips set in a determined line.

Bobbie gazed at her helplessly; he felt utterly at a loss. The only thing of which he was sure was that he must at all costs prevent her from marrying such a man as Fernandez. He summoned all his wits, and began to reason with her. For twenty minutes he was exceedingly eloquent, but made no impression whatever; she appeared utterly unaware that he was speaking. The situation was desperate. He could not leave her, he could not move her by main force, and he had left his cigarettes in the train.

"By Jove, I wish I could kidnap you!" he muttered desperately.

A sound startled him—a sound he had heard before, and of which he knew well the significance—the muffled tread of padded hoofs. He rose abruptly and climbed to the top of the bank, peering through the darkness. Dimly he made out just below him a train of mules winding slowly along towards a defile in the hills. He knew well the meaning of this silent caravan, and on the instant the maddest, most fantastic resolve took possession of his reason. He turned for a moment and eyed Dolores with a whimsical look of apology, then, scrambling down the far side of the bank, he set off at a quick run after the mule train.

III.

For some time Dolores was so preoccupied in preserving her air of haughty resolution that she did not notice Bobbie's absence. When she turned and saw that he had vanished, her haughtiness speedily changed to consternation. She forgot her indignation against him, and only remembered that she could not possibly do without him, that she dared not stay there by herself in the darkness and loneliness. She sprang up and climbed to the top of the bank in search of him, calling aloud in desperation. No answer came, but, instead, out of the darkness around her stepped three men. They

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were as ruffianly-looking a crew as could be found in all Spain, and Dolores shrank back with a little cry. Instantly a hand was pressed over her mouth, her eyes were covered, and she was picked up and carried off, she knew not whither.

For a minute or two she struggled valiantly, then, realising the futility of her efforts, she lay quiet, wondering in an agony of fear what would befall her next.

For twenty minutes she was carried swiftly through the night. Then her captors halted, she was placed gently on her feet, and the cloth was removed from her eyes. She stared about her dizzily. She was in a defile of the mountains, and all about her were dark figures of men and mules, the latter with their hoofs padded to deaden the sound. She had little doubt what had befallen her. Without question these were brigands, and she, hapless girl, had been captured for ransom.

For a minute fear took possession of her soul as she realised the helplessness of her position, then, resolved to prove herself true daughter of a fearless race, she threw up her head, choked back her tears, and smiled bravely at the men who stood about her. To her surprise they grinned back at her in most friendly wise; she was speedily mounted on a mule, and the caravan moved forward.

A minute later Dolores' heart gave a bound of delight. She heard a familiar voice at her side.

"Don't be afraid; they won't dare to hurt you."

She turned and saw Bobbie astride a mule beside her. His hands were bound behind his back, but he looked extraordinarily cheerful.

"Oh, I am so glad they have taken you, too!" she cried, with a sigh of relief. "You—you won't leave me again, will you?"

"Not if I can help it," said Bobbie fervently.

"I *am* so glad you are here," she whispered again.

Bobbie blushed unwontedly and fell suddenly silent.

That was a strange ride up into the stillness of the mountains. Before and behind loomed the dark forms of the mules, with their dull, muffled tread; beside them towered the steep rocky crags. Occasionally a lantern flashed and lighted for a moment the surrounding hills, occasionally a halt was called while the men listened eagerly for sounds of pursuit.

Bobbie and Dolores talked together in whispers. All her fear had fled, and the night unlocked her tongue. She told him of her happy childhood out West before her Spanish mother died and her father became absorbed in the whirl of money-making. She spoke a little of the life she had led since she came to Spain to visit her mother's relations; and more from what she left unsaid than from her actual words, he gathered how lonely she had been, and how her free spirit had chafed at the restraint and rigid convention of her uncle's household. A little she talked of her voyage to Europe. Bobbie understood all when he learned that Fernandez had been a fellow-passenger.

It was after midnight when they reached their destination, a tiny village high in the mountains. They were taken to the best house in the place, and a room was hastily vacated for Dolores. Bobbie accompanied her to the door and eyed the place disconsolately.

"It's a dismal-looking hole," he said apologetically.

Dolores laughed. "I'm so tired I think I could sleep in a pigsty. But you won't be far away, will you?"

"I shall stay in the next room, so if you want anything, or—or are frightened, call out, and I will see you have proper attention."

She put her hand on his arm and looked up at him gratefully: "I am so glad you are here," she said for the third time.

But when Bobbie left her, there was no elation on his face; rather he bore the look of a man who would welcome a good thrashing.

IV.

For ten days Bobbie and Dolores lived quietly at the little mountain village, and Dolores marvelled at the happiness of each hour. To begin with, the brigands treated her with extraordinary generosity. After the first day, everything that the most fastidious maiden could desire, from linen sheets to choicest fruits, appeared as if by magic. Secondly, she and Bobbie were allowed to wander where they would, though he assured her that escape was impossible. The weather was perfect, the air invigorating, and the country ideal. Dolores was essentially a country-lover, happiest in the freedom of the wide spaces of the world. And, thirdly, Bobbie was a most entrancing companion. There were times when she found herself

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"She turned eagerly to Dolores. 'Oh, Miss Lisson, isn't it splendid?'"

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comparing his untiring devotion, his constant thought for her happiness, his breezy, straightforward comradeship with the somewhat sickly sentimentality of Fernandez' wooing—times when she remembered his condemnation of her lover, and pondered gravely on his words.

And Bobbie? Alack, he could look neither to the past nor to the future without dismay! He only knew that to be with Dolores was to be in Paradise, that he loved her with all his heart, and that he was deceiving her.

It was afternoon on the tenth day of their captivity. Dolores sat in a flower-decked glade, gazing over the glorious panorama of the Pyrenees; Bobbie lay at her feet and feasted his eyes on her face. Suddenly she turned to him.

"Mr. Mainwaring, I have made a discovery."

Bobbie's face grew white. "What is it?" he asked hoarsely.

Her laugh reassured him. "I have talked with Manetta, the woman who waits upon me, and I have learned that these luxuries which surround me are provided by you; that it is owing to you that I am treated with such respect—owing to you that my captivity has been so—happy." Her voice dropped a little on the last word; she leaned down and placed her hand on his arm. "I have learned that, when you came to my help down yonder, a loyal friend came into my life."

As she spoke, Bobbie's face grew troubled, a look of pain darkened his eyes; but he answered her steadily—

"Miss Lisson, I wanted to win your friendship, hoping that what was insolence in a stranger will be pardoned in a friend. May I speak to you about Fernandez?"

She sat silent a minute, then bowed her head.

"I've known him six years, in Mexico, in Lisbon, and in New York," continued Bobbie earnestly. "Believe me, no decent man would call him friend, and no good woman could know a day's happiness as his wife."

He dreaded another indignant outburst from Dolores, but she sat silent, looking at him with troubled eyes. At last she sighed.

"It is so difficult to know whom to believe."

"I know," said Bobbie gently, "and I also know that, when you learn more about me, you will marvel that I should dare to judge another man."

Dolores put out her hand with a quick, impulsive gesture, but Bobbie continued gravely—

"For that reason I want you to make me a promise now—that you will not wed Fernandez for a year. It isn't much to promise when it concerns your life's happiness. And I want you to keep your promise whatsoever you may think of me in the future. Will you?"

Dolores lifted her eyes and looked at him steadily. "Yes," she said simply, "I promise."

Bobbie gave a sigh of relief, and rose to his feet.

"I've a confession to make——" he began huskily.

He stopped with a cry of surprise. Up the mountain path, accompanied by three muleteers, rode Lucetta, her lips dimpling, her eyes dancing with mischief. She slipped to the ground and, running to Bobbie, flung herself into his arms.

"Oh, my dearest Bobbie," she cried melodramatically, "I have been captured by brigands! Save me!"

Bobbie gazed at his sister in blank amazement, but Dolores, who greeted her effusively, proved far more sympathetic, and to her Lucetta poured forth a wondrous tale of the adventures she had met with in her search for her brother, and the harrowing treatment she had received at the hands of her captors.

When presently Dolores left brother and sister together, Bobbie turned to Lucetta in the nearest approach to a rage she had ever seen her good-tempered brother.

"What in the world——"

"My dear Bobbie," interposed Lucetta calmly, "when I got your letter, telling me what you have done, could you expect me to stay quietly in Paris? You know I adore romance, and this is the most amazing romance I've ever known: you must let me play too, though, of course," she added solemnly, "it is quite impossible for you to go about kidnapping runaway beauties like this; it—it isn't done."

"Well, it has been done this time, anyhow," said Bobbie grimly. "I would rather kill her than let her marry Fernandez."

"My! Bobbie, you are in earnest."

"Yes, I am," he said shortly.

"Well, she is the loveliest girl I've seen," mused Lucetta. "What is to be the end of the adventure?"

Bobbie eyed his sister grimly. "The end was just coming when you interrupted us.

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I shall confess that I have deceived her, and let her go."

"Gracious, you mustn't do that!" cried Lucetta. "You'll spoil it all. Think of the romance."

"Blow the romance!"

"Why, Bobbie, don't you like her?" asked Lucetta wickedly.

"*Like* her!" cried Bobbie desperately—"*like* her! Good Heavens, Lucetta!"

Lucetta laughed softly. "Now, listen to me, Bobbie. You are not to tell her a word about the matter. As soon as you have persuaded her to give up Fernandez, we must pretend that our ransoms have arrived, and go staidly back to civilisation. She need never know how she has been tricked until ——until you are married."

Bobbie stood a moment silent, fighting the temptation to follow Lucetta's advice, then he shook his head.

"No," he said steadily. "Come what may, I'm going to be straight with her now."

"Oh, don't be silly!" cried Lucetta impatiently. "If you tell her now, she will go straight off to Fernandez."

"No, I have her promise not to do that."

Lucetta raised her eyebrows. "Then she'll marry some other villain, and hate him and be wretched."

"If it comes to that," said Bobbie dismally, "I'm a choice villain myself."

"Ah, but she loves you, Bobbie," said Lucetta softly.

"Nonsense!" said Bobbie eagerly. "What —what could make you imagine such a thing?"

Lucetta broke into a peal of laughter. "Oh, you dear, blind bat! Didn't you see her face when I kissed you? She thought I was your wife."

Bobbie flushed crimson. His face lighted up with a sudden look of hope, but only for a moment. He set his lips resolutely and shook his head.

"It's no good, Lucetta. I've done what I set out to do; I've saved her from Fernandez. Now I've got to pay the price. She must learn the truth about me."

Lucetta eyed him gravely. "I have always feared that chivalry would be the ruin of you; now I'm sure. Luckily you have a sister who will save you from the consequences of your own quixotic folly."

With which dire threat she left him to the comfort of his own fears.

V.

Two days passed, and not for one minute during those forty-eight hours was Bobbie left alone with Dolores. Lucetta shrewdly guessed that her brother would seek opportunity to make his confession to Dolores in private; her object in life was to prevent such opportunity occurring. Her resolution was amazing. She hated walking, yet she tramped the hills for hours with her companions; she dreaded the ruin of her complexion, yet she braved the sun at noonday to share their picnic lunch; she had only one frock and a cracked mirror, yet she endured it all with smiling face, and never for a moment relaxed her watch upon the couple.

Alas, such sisterly devotion was rewarded with scant gratitude! Bobbie grew hourly more gloomy and irritable, while Dolores sat ever silent, watching him with strange, questioning glance. No wonder that Lucetta was more bored than she had ever been in her life.

The third morning she could endure it no longer. She had Bobbie to herself for a moment, and seized her opportunity.

"Bobbie," she said resolutely, "we must be ransomed this morning, and catch the night train to Paris."

"Not till I have told Miss Lisson the truth," said Bobbie steadily.

Dolores was approaching.

"You tiresome boy!" whispered Lucetta. "I shall just *make* you follow my advice."

She turned eagerly to Dolores. "Oh, Miss Lisson, isn't it splendid? Our ransoms have been paid, and we are free. Aren't you glad?"

Dolores stared at her blankly, then she turned to Bobbie. "Is this true?" she asked, with a strange gravity.

But Bobbie made no answer; he turned abruptly and strode out of the room, seeking a more convenient spot for the expression of his feelings.

Dolores watched him go with a queer expression in her eyes—a strange mingling of hope, pity, and wistful entreaty. When he disappeared, she gave a sigh of disappointment.

She turned coldy to Lucetta. "I will say good-bye, Miss Mainwaring. Please thank your brother for his kindness to me. It is not likely that—that we shall meet again."

"But where are you going?" cried Lucetta blankly.

"I shall ride down to Rigo and take the train back to my home. Good-bye."

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"But you can't go yet," cried Lucetta desperately.

"What should prevent me?"

"But—Bobbie and I must go with you."

"Thank you, I prefer to go alone," answered Dolores coldly. "Good-bye."

Without another word she went into her room and shut the door upon the astounded Lucetta.

Regardless of the sun, regardless of her complexion, Lucetta ran wildly out in search of Bobbie. She sought in vain. Round the village, up the hillside, through the woods she hurried; she climbed commanding heights, she scoured the country for a sight of him. At the end of the morning she returned to the village wearied out, and learned that Dolores had left an hour before. She sat down and wept tears of vexation.

"Never," she vowed—"never again will I have any dealings with romance!"

Bobbie did not appear until late in the afternoon. When he heard his sister's story, his face grew on a sudden so grey and haggard that Lucetta forbore to reproach him for his desertion, and, indeed, he did not wait for reproaches. He emptied the contents of his purse into her lap, bade her go and wait for him in Paris, sprang on to his mule, and vanished in a cloud of dust.

VI.

DOLORES sat before the little hostelry at Rigo, sipping her coffee and waiting for the night train to Seville. The light had faded in the west, the evening air blew chill. Dolores was very lonely. Two tears rolled down her cheeks, and were angrily brushed away, but two more followed, and presently a little sob broke the stillness.

Suddenly out of the darkness stepped a man. He was covered from head to foot with white dust, his hands were grimy, and there was an unromantic smudge across his nose. He breathed heavily, like one who has been running against time.

Dolores sprang to her feet. "Mr. Mainwaring! You?" Then she stiffened suddenly. "Why are you here?" she asked coldly.

Bobbie put out his hand entreatingly.

"It's all right. I—I'll go away in a minute. But there's something I must tell you first. I've been trying to tell it you for three days."

Dolores did not answer. Bobbie continued huskily—

"I've deceived you. Those beggars who carried us off weren't brigands. They were smugglers, and I bribed them to do it, and not to let you learn the truth. It was a blackguardly trick to play you, and—I'm sorry."

"Why did you do it?" asked Dolores quietly.

"I wanted to keep you from marrying Fernandez."

"And why do you tell me the truth now?"

Bobbie lifted his head and looked her straight in the eyes. "I couldn't bear not to be straight with you now," he said simply; "I love you so. I know there's no chance for me, but I—I wanted to be worthy of your friendship—always. Good-bye."

"Wait," said Dolores quickly. "Two nights ago Manetta found me crying. She was sorry for me, and though you had paid her to be silent, she told me the truth."

"Two nights ago?"

"Yes. But I waited for you to tell me yourself. Oh, if you had not told me, I could never have forgiven you!"

She held out her hand. Bobbie took it mechanically.

"Good-bye. God bless you!" he muttered huskily.

Suddenly he found his hand enclosed in soft, clinging fingers. He looked at Dolores, and saw the laughter in her eyes. He took a step towards her.

"Oh," she cried breathlessly, "there's the train coming! Won't you take me home, Bobbie dear?"

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THE SAVAGE AND "FATTY."

By JOHN BARNETT,

Author of "A Queen of Castaways," "Eve in Earnest," etc.

"I WONDER why people's insides are so often different from their outsides?" observed the Savage thoughtfully.

"Rather funny *you* should say that!" I retorted, regarding him as he balanced upon a gate.

For the words apply quite curiously to the Savage himself.

Outwardly, he has the clear blue eyes, the fair skin, and the cherubic expression of the Good Boy who figures in those terrible books with which an earlier generation of youth was tortured.

Inwardly—well, his father carries premature grey hairs, and his house-master is in need of a rest cure. But he means well, I do hope.

"Why is it funny?" inquired the Savage.

"Never mind," I answered cautiously. "But it's quite true. It often is the case."

The Savage favoured me with a rather disparaging glance, and appeared to meditate. For my part, I gazed sadly at his shamefully ill-treated knickerbockers. His people actually hold *me* responsible for the Savage when I am in his company; and I would as soon be responsible for an uncaged and sinful monkey.

"We must brush you down a bit before your mother sees you," I said nervously. "If we can only get a *little* of that mud off, it will be all to the good."

But the Savage only smiled a far-away smile. It is that smile which gives sentimental strangers a grossly false idea of his character.

"Bother the mud!" he said genially. "I was thinking about old Fatty."

And then I forgot about the mud at once. It is largely for the sake of the Savage's occasional moods of reminiscence that I haunt his company. But, with great restraint, I asked no questions. I leaned casually against the gate beside the Savage. A soft breeze, scented rather daintily by the spring, was ruffling his fair hair.

"Got any peppermints?" asked the Savage briskly.

I produced a large white bag from my pocket and handed it over without a word. And this is the tragic story of Fatty, even as the Savage told it, with one cheek distended as though with toothache, and his speech perceptibly blurred.

"Talking of peppermints, Fatty is the only one of us who doesn't eat sweets in Lower School history lecture. It's in the dark, you know, with magic lantern slides, and a rare chance for grub. The master who gives it is so keen on his history stuff that he never seems to hear paper bags rustling. That's not a bit like most masters, worse luck! But Fatty sits there, never touching a sweet, and fairly drinking in every word, especially when there are knights in armour on the screen. I call it chucking away a chance, myself.

"Fatty's real name is Fitzgerald, and his people were silly enough to christen him Everard. Not that we go in for Christian names at school, of course. He doesn't look a bit like his name. He's a small chap, all round and soft and fat. His cheeks are like dumplings. So you understand why we call him Fatty. I believe I thought of the name myself first. It came to me quite easily, directly I saw him.

"But he simply hated the name. He's not naturally quarrelsome, but he had a fight about it, his second day at school. I'd quite thought he was a regular rotter until I saw that fight. He'd been called Fatty about a hundred times already, and no one thought he minded it a bit. We weren't to know that his rage against the name had been boiling up inside him all the time. But we knew it all right when he jumped up, with a kind of smothered yell, and hit Smith minor right in the mouth! They began to fight at once, naturally. It meant all our form being late for prep. in Big School, but

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it was well worth it, and it gave us time to get it comfortably over.

"Fatty got licked, of course. Smith minor stood a head taller than him, and was a lean, hefty sort of chap, in the running for his house badge at footer. But it was the plucky fight that Fatty put up that amazed us all, and made me alter my opinion about him. He fought as long as he could see, and would have gone on longer if we had let him. He was not a good fighter at all; he could hardly use his hands a bit. He was rather like a fat punching-bag put up in front of Smith minor. But, my word, he knew how to take his gruel! I don't believe that one of the old knights he was so keen about could have taken a bad licking better.

"I found out afterwards that they were at the back of it all, but I didn't know it then, of course. It was rather horrid to see him licked, and refusing to give in. Smith minor, who is a sportsman himself, tried to get him to chuck up the sponge at last. But Fatty kept on his legs somehow, swinging his fagged arms quite uselessly, with his puffy face more puffy than ever. We pulled him away in the end. He didn't want to give in. He tried to call us names. But we patted him on his fat back, all of us, even Smith minor. We liked his pluck. You couldn't help liking it.

"I stayed with him when the rest were gone, and helped him to wash his face. We were badly late for prep., anyway. He blubbed a little, for the first time, when we were alone. 'I didn't want to give in!' he kept saying. '*They* would never have done it.'

"'Who wouldn't?' I asked him.

"'The old knights—Sir Nigel and chaps like that,' he choked out. 'It's not being beaten that I mind—they were beaten, too, sometimes—but they'd have stood up to Smith minor until they dropped—I know they would!'

"I stared at him rather nervously. I wasn't quite sure that his brain hadn't been hurt by his licking; he'd been hit on the head pretty often.

"'The old knights?' I said. 'Does your head feel at all barmy, Fatty?'

"He squared up to me at once.

"'I won't be called Fatty!' he screamed. 'They wouldn't have stood it, and I won't.'

"I wasn't going to fight him, of course. You are bound to humour a chap who's just had a most awful licking.

"'Look here, you'll just have to stand it,' I said. 'You can't fight the whole Lower School, and you'll be called Fatty now till you're as old as Methuselah!'

"He stared at me quite wretchedly.

"'Shall I really?' he asked.

"'Yes, you will,' I told him. 'But what does it matter?'

"He seemed to be thinking.

"'I'm wondering what the knights would have done if they'd been called Fatty or some other op—opprobrious title?' he said, as though he was talking to himself. 'I suppose—I suppose they would have just tried to do things to make the title honourable. I shall have to try to do the same.'

"I thought myself that he'd done something that way already, but I didn't tell him so, of course. It doesn't do to risk making a 'new guv'nor' cocky.

"'Suppose we go into prep.,' I said. 'We're not more than half an hour late.'

"So we went. And we got a hundred lines each. Fatty tried to make me let him do mine as well as his own, because it was his fault we were late. That was just enough, and I liked him for offering, but I couldn't accept. There would have been trouble; my handwriting is too well known. But he and I rather palled up to each other after that.

"He was simply soaked in stories about old knights. As for 'The White Company,' I believe he knew it word for word by heart. And he could tell you tales about the most scrumptiously bloodthirsty fighting by the hour together, if you let him. Which I did not always do. I don't think it would have been good for a 'new guv'nor.' Besides, I like to talk myself, sometimes. He was by nature idle at lessons. If he hadn't been, we could never have hit it off so well. Greek and Latin and mathematics made him feel sleepy and bored and sick of life, just as they do me. But, my word, he was a whale for history! I remember he actually had the cheek to correct Niblock, the history master, once in the middle of a lecture.

"Niblock had made a slip, I suppose. He'd just said something about some old French ruffian being given a chaplet of pearls by some old English king or other after some scrap outside Calais. I wasn't paying much attention myself, bless you! Nor were the rest of us, except Fatty. We were just sitting there in the dark, wolfing sweets, if we had any. (Mine were caramels that day.) But, to my amazement, I heard a shrill voice beside me.

"'It was Eustace de Ribeaumont who got the chaplet, not Geoffrey of Charnigny!'

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Fatty called out. (Or it may have been the other way on.)

"'What's that?' he snapped. 'Who spoke?'

"'Me,' said Fatty, very red in the face.

"'My mistake,' said old Niblock, in his jerky way. 'Fitzgerald is quite right. He will come to me afterwards for daring to show some glimmerings of intelligence!'

"We all thought, and Fatty thought, that he was in for something hot, but, to his surprise, Niblock was very decent to him. He used to have him to tea after that, and they would jaw about a chap called Froissart, and silly things of the same sort.

"Fatty came to stay with me last Christmas holidays. He was as mad as ever, but my people liked him. My mater liked him partly because he was small and pale-looking, and partly because of his really fine appetite. My mater, for some reason, enjoys seeing other people enjoy their meals, which Fatty always does. My governor liked him because Fatty had given him to understand —without meaning to make any mischief, to do Fatty justice—that, although despising other prizes, if there had been one offered for history, he would have had a shot at winning it. And my governor said that it was refreshing to meet a boy with *any* ambition for *any* prizes. And he looked rather unkindly at me as he said it. As for my sister Dorothy, she liked Fatty for his manners, which were a rather clumsy imitation of what he imagined the manners of the old knights to have been, when he happened to remember it, which was not always. My brother Gerald liked Fatty in a mild sort of way, because he luckily did not know what Fatty's secret opinion was about people who only cared for cricket and footer. He actually had the cheek to despise them! And Gerald, of course, has his school colours for both.

"Fatty drew me aside the first day after breakfast. And I may say that he had done himself quite amazingly proud at table. You would almost have thought that he would have liked to keep quiet for a bit. But no, he was full of beans.

"'Have you any four cross-roads near here?' he said.

"I thought for a bit, although surprised, and then told him of the place where the hounds meet two miles away.

"'Good!' said Fatty quite briskly, and took something black out of his pocket. 'I'm thinking, if you don't mind, of tying this patch over my eye, and riding to those cross-roads—that is, if you can lend me a mount.'

"I always try to deal patiently with Fatty. Besides, he was my guest.

"'Why a patch over your eye?' I asked, to begin with.

"He looked at me kind of pityingly.

"'Have you forgotten your "White Company" again?' he asked. 'The best class of knights wore patches to increase the peril and difficulty and honour of their exploits.'

"'All right,' I said. 'And why cross-roads?'

"'It was at cross-roads that they always waited on the chance of an adventure or a gentle spear-running.'

"'All right,' I said again. 'But what do *you* expect to do there?'

"Fatty grew a little red.

"'It's like this,' he explained, kind of eagerly. 'I know there aren't many people nowadays who think like me, but there's just a chance that there may be others. If one person likes and believes in old knights, perhaps just a few others do. And I *might* happen to meet one of them at the cross-roads, if I was very lucky.'

"I kept on being patient with Fatty. Somehow his voice made me almost sorry for him —I don't know why.

"'It sounds pretty reasonable,' I said quite kindly.

"'I'm so glad you think so,' Fatty said quickly. 'You see, I want to make the most of the chance of being in strange country down here. They—they rather laugh at me at home.'

"I put my last question to Fatty.

"'Can you ride?' I asked him.

"He squirmed a very little.

"'I've never actually tried,' he said gloomily. Then he brightened up. 'But I quite think I could do it by instinct. You needn't be in the least afraid to lend me a—a *destriere*.'

"But I was, when he had told me what *destriere* means. I saw that this would never do; it would not be safe even to lend Fatty my own pony. I had been very patient with him, but now it was time to take firm measures. It was really kindest to him.

"'Come with me,' I said, 'and I'll show you the only *destriere* I can lend you.'

"So he came along, all quivering with excitement. But it was quite awful to see his face change when I showed him old

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Binks, the donkey, smouching about the paddock.

"Fatty went whiter than usual, and his eyes shone. I really believed for a moment that he was going to hit me. It would be a most painful thing to have a fight with your own guest. But Fatty only choked down something in his throat.

"'It's—it's not very nice of you to—to guy me,' he said; and he turned right away and went off at a trot across the paddock to the copse. He always clears out when he feels horrid, and knows that fighting won't do. I stood looking after him, and somehow I felt rather a low-class sort of beast.

"But I went in search of him in half an hour. I knew that old Fatty never bore malice or stayed sulky. It was lucky I came. I found him dangling head downwards halfway up a tree that he had been trying to climb. He can't climb for toffee. A branch had passed through his coat. He was glad to see me, I know, although far too proud to call for help, besides being nearly black in the face. When I had helped him down, I apologised about the donkey. Finding him like that, feet upwards, made apologising easier, somehow.

"'I was a silly goat to lose my wool,' he said very decently, 'but I did so want a chance of advancement!'

"'Well, you'll get it this afternoon,' I told him. 'We're going to follow the beagles—on foot, of course—and you'll want all the wind there is in your body.'

"'By Jove,' Fatty said, excited as anything, 'will there be women out, too?'

"I told him that there would. Personally, I have very little use for women.

"'Then,' Fatty said, in a kind of hushed voice, 'perhaps—perhaps, with any luck, I shall do a deed before the bright eyes of some fair lady.'

"'Perhaps you will,' I said, to humour him.

"Well, he did do a deed—two deeds, in fact. But I know that he wished he hadn't. And if he had guessed what was going to happen to him, I don't believe he would have gone to the meet at all.

"There were quite a lot of people out. I drew Fatty's attention to a small girl-kid on a donkey, with a boy to look after her. But Fatty seemed to think it was rather bad form even to ask him to look at a donkey, remembering our old Binks. As a matter of fact, I had only meant that, if he was looking out for a fair lady to show off before, there was one who wouldn't have any sort of objection. That girl-kid couldn't have been more than six, but she was making eyes at every man within reach. But apparently she wasn't old or fair enough for Fatty. A minute or two later I heard him give a kind of gasp.

"'Oh, by my hilt,' I heard him mutter—that was always his favourite oath, when he remembered to use it—'*there's* my fair lady!'

"He was staring at a tall woman as though his eyes would drop out. I got quite anxious about them. I knew who it was. Mrs. Courtney was her name. I suppose you might call her good-looking, but she was pretty old—nearly thirty, I should think—and she was dressed altogether too swaggerly for beagling. You could see that she was thinking a lot more about her rig-out than about the sport. I don't like her myself, especially after that day.

"'She's married,' I whispered to Fatty, thinking to choke him off. He seemed disappointed, but only for a moment.

"'I don't care,' he said. 'What I do will be done in her honour, without any thought of winning her for myself. That's the true knightly spirit.'

"It is a mistake to argue with Fatty when he has got the bit between his teeth. I always know the symptoms.

"'Whatever are you going to try to do?' I whispered.

"'I don't know yet exactly,' he answered, 'but it will be something big, I hope.'

"I was glad that the hounds got a move on just then. I was getting nervous about Fatty. I was afraid that, if we hung about much longer, he might do something really silly, like taking off his coat and spreading it in front of Mrs. Courtney for her to walk on. He's really quite sane—at least, I suppose and hope he is—but sometimes he's capable of anything.

"We found quite soon that day. I suppose you know all about beagling. You can either run straight or cunning. Personally, I ran cunning that day. I felt that it was wisest. I wasn't in the best of condition; it was too soon after Christmas. Mrs. Courtney ran cunning, too, with most of the other ladies. But that silly old Fatty did his very best to run straight.

"Considering his shape and condition, he really did marvels. But it was quite awful to hear him choke and pant when hounds checked. I didn't want to have to fetch a doctor or an ambulance, and so, at one of the checks, I begged him to cut across the circle

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iat the hare always makes, as I and Mrs. ourtney and a good many others were oing. But he wouldn't hear of it. He as almost purple in the face and very rocky n his legs, but, when hounds started off gain, he started after them. I had to let im go.

The field would have to come across a hedge and a wide ditch full of water. There was a little river quite near, all brown and flooded, racing along like mad.

"Hounds came up to us pretty quickly, with the master and whips trotting behind. Then the field began to straggle in. I could

"I heard her call him 'a naughty, tiresome little boy!' And I knew what that would mean to Fatty, remembering his pride and his feelings towards her."

"At our next stopping-place we cunning runners were able to wait for hounds to come up. The hare had made a terrific circle, and we could hang about quite comfortably and see the field arrive. Personally, I sat on a gate. Mrs. Courtney was standing near me, so was the girl-kid in red on a donkey. The going was very heavy, after tons of rain.

see poor old Fatty last of all, beat to the world, and rolling, but game as anything. He lifted up his head and saw the hedge, and Mrs. Courtney beyond it. He altered his course at once and made straight for her. I saw that he was going to try to jump that hedge under her very eyes, knowing nothing about the full ditch waiting for him beyond.

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"I would have stopped him if I could, but there wasn't a chance. Fatty was long past hearing anything. He was actually trying to sprint, dead beat as he was. He lifted himself at the hedge, and I still maintain that he did wonderfully well to clear it with a scramble. But it would have been better for him if he hadn't cleared it. He landed fair and square in that deep ditch, and a great column of filthy water almost as big as Fatty himself simply deluged Mrs. Courtney.

"Her clothes were very swagger, as I told you, and they must have been pretty well ruined, but, all the same, she didn't behave nicely a bit. She proved herself a cat. If she had been a hungry tigress, she couldn't have glared more savagely at poor Fatty as he dragged himself out. He was scarcely wetter than she was, although he'd been in up to the neck. I was almost falling off the gate with laughing—I couldn't help it—but I heard her call him 'a naughty, tiresome little boy!' And I knew what that would mean to Fatty, remembering his pride and his feelings towards her. It was a hateful insult.

"I saw Fatty turn away and begin to run quite blindly, just as he had run in the morning across the paddock. I was thinking about following him, or else trying to tell Mrs. Courtney my opinion of her cruelty, when I heard a terrific yell.

"That girl-kid's donkey was running away, too! Something had stung it, I suppose. Anyhow, it was quite mad for the moment. It went off at a gallop like blazes, with the girl-kid clinging to the reins and shrieking, straight for the little flooded river. Some of the men spurted after it. Personally, I stayed where I was, like a stuck pig, and watched.

"Fatty had been making for the river, too, without in the least seeing where he was going. He and the donkey met at an angle upon the very bank. I saw Fatty sort of wake up out of a bad dream and clutch at the reins, and miss. And then Fatty and that mad donkey and the girl-kid went slap into the water together.

"Fatty is not much good at cricket or footer, and, as for swimming, he can just struggle across the bath at school in the shallow end. But he didn't bother to remember that just then. All the same, it was that donkey really who saved both Fatty and the girl-kid. But no one gave him any credit for it afterwards, quite naturally. Fatty got it all, I'm glad to say. The water seemed to sober that wretched donkey directly he touched it. He turned round and made back for the bank. Fatty had managed very luckily to grab the reins, and they kept him up. But it looked as though he was guiding the donkey. As for the girl-kid, she stuck to the saddle as though she had been glued there. They all three splashed back to dry land.

"You ought to have heard the fuss they made about old Fatty! The mother of the girl-kid actually kissed him publicly, although I am bound to say that he did what he could to squirm out of it. Several people insisted on shaking hands with him. Everyone, except Mrs. Courtney, was calling him a young hero. Mrs. Courtney did not seem to have changed her mind about him a bit. (That donkey quite went out of his way to shake himself all over her.) But I have never seen Fatty look so miserable.

"'They wouldn't listen to me!' he panted, when we had got away at last, and were trotting home for Fatty to change his clothes. 'I tried to tell them that it wasn't a real deed. I was just running to get away from everyone for a bit, and I didn't think about deeds or anything when I met the donkey on the bank!' And afterwards it was the donkey who really got us both out. But they wouldn't listen to me.'

"'That's all rot!' I said. 'You needn't have gone in, and being such a wretched mug at swimming made it really finer.'

"I was saying everything I could to comfort him. But Fatty wouldn't be comforted.

"'I believe I slipped on the bank, and the donkey dragged me in!' he said, in a sort of a howl.

"'Well,' I said, 'at any rate, you did your deed before your lady.'

"But Fatty quite turned on me. 'My lady!' he shouted. 'Didn't you hear her call me "a naughty, tiresome little boy"?'

"I didn't say any more to him then—it wasn't safe—but it seems to me that you don't often get what you want exactly as you want it," concluded the Savage sagely.

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LOUIS XIV. PLAYING BILLIARDS IN 1694.

From a contemporary engraving.

BILLIARDS

THE EVOLUTION AND PROGRESS OF THE GAME.

By FREDERIC ADYE.

GAMES, like everything else, must have had a beginning, and to whatever perfection it may since have been carried, it is probable that, in every instance, that beginning was a very small one. We may take it for granted that no game, as it is played to-day, sprang full-armed, so to speak, from its inventor's head. It is more than possible that all those games which to-day delight and exercise so many thousands of persons, in which the ball supplies the *motif*, had some common origin; but what the original game was, or whether it was played first upon a board, and then adapted to the larger spaces of a court or field, or *vice versâ*, we have no certain information. Probably the latter was the case—that a game which gave so great delight when played by daylight in the open air was reduced to dimensions suitable to an elevated board or table, and in this form served to beguile long winter evenings, or afforded a pleasurable substitute for out-door exercise in foul weather.

Though not probably so old as chess, billiards is certainly a game of great antiquity. Its derivation is said to be from *bal* and *yard*, a stick; and from all the evidence that can be collected as to the original game from which it was adapted, we are inclined to imagine that this must have been "mall" (mallet), said to have been the prototype of other games in which the ball is propelled by a mace or club, as cricket, croquet, etc. To cricket the game bears no resemblance whatever, but there is certainly a remarkable analogy between it and croquet, as the latter game is played to-day, a knowledge of

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angles and an appreciation of "strength" being essential qualifications for the successful exponent of either. An old print, too—to be found in a book called "The School of Recreation," 1710—representing a game of billiards, shows the ball being driven through arches standing on the bed of the table; and not many years ago I observed similar arches in the equipment of a primitive croquet set, though I do not remember ever to have seen such in use. In this quaint print, by the way, both players appear to be making their stroke at the same time—a method which reminds one of the young lady's notable suggestion for cricket: "Why don't they bowl both ends at the same time? It would make the game so much livelier!" Exactly. The liveliness of, say, a game of pool with all the players performing simultaneously may be readily imagined.

The improvement in the material for our modern games is as remarkable as the development in the skill with which they are played, the one, of course, being largely accountable for the other. Nowhere is this more noticeable than in billiards. The primitive game—though always, we should imagine, the best of indoor pastimes—must have been a poor sport as compared with that we enjoy to-day. The modern table of gleaming mahogany, polished walnut, or plain oak, standing firm and true on its eight massive legs, with its solid bed of best Bangor slate, fast low cushions of the finest rubber, and fine green cloth, is a magnificent piece of furniture, and contrasts with the old wooden-bedded, list-cushioned, baize-covered affair—of which one occasionally comes across a surviving specimen standing on its six spindly legs in some ancient manor-house—as sharply as a Pullman saloon car does with some mildewy old first-class coach of the early 'fifties, in which one may have chanced to travel on a branch line of railway.

THE SONS OF LOUIS XIV. PLAYING "THE ROYAL GAME OF FORTIFICATIONS" UPON A CONTEMPORARY BILLIARD TABLE.

From a contemporary engraving.

THE DUCHESS OF BURGUNDY IN 1694.

From a contemporary engraving.

As might reasonably be expected, the improvement in play has advanced in equal ratio with that in the tables. It is just the same as it has been with cricket, where the improvement of pitch has been attended by more rapid and larger scoring. It by no means follows, however, that this implies greater skill on the part of the performer. Indeed, it is highly probable that the renowned Fuller Pilch, Nyren, and other

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famous players of the old Hambledon School would have proved fully the equals of our Steels and Studds of a later date, had they enjoyed the same facilities as are afforded on the superfine county grounds of to-day. Similarly, it might be expected that the performances of Carr and Kentfield, or other early cueists of distinction, would have greatly surpassed, on a first-class modern table, their actual achievements on the vastly inferior boards in use at that period. For instance, the best break of Bedford, a noted player in the early part of the last century—159—would perhaps compare not badly with those made under far more favourable conditions by the experts of more recent date. These players, together with Mr. Bartley, the proprietor of the rooms at Bath where Carr served as marker, were the pioneers of the game as it is played to-day. Doubtless, as has been remarked by Mr. Sydenham Dixon, as "brave men lived before Agamemnon," so there were good men before these, but we hear little of them. Likely enough there were past-masters of the cue in France—whence the game is said to have come to us—long before any really deserving such a title appeared in England; but it is unlikely that in this country, where the game was, in its earlier stages, generally yet undeservedly tabooed by respectable persons, the level of those who did play it was at all a high one.

A GERMAN TABLE, WITH POCKETS, OF THE LATE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.
From a contemporary engraving.

However this may have been, Carr and Kentfield appear to have been the earliest claimants to championship honours. The first-named flourished *circa* 1825, and his skill seems to have far excelled that of his

A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY BILLIARD ROOM.
From an engraving by N. Guerard.

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contemporaries. He achieved his great reputation chiefly by means of the "side-twist"—whether this meant "side" or "screw," or a combination of both, is not very clear—and the strokes he was able to make by means of it were considered so marvellous that many were led to attribute them to some special chalk which he used. Carr is said to have promptly and profitably adopted this curious surmise, and to have made quite a good thing out of it by grinding up some fine chalk and retailing it in pill-boxes at half-a-crown apiece. While deriding their superstition, one can readily imagine how marvellous certain strokes must have appeared to men entirely unacquainted with the mysteries of side and screw. Though Pierce Egan described Carr as "father of the side-stroke," it is probable that his employer was the actual discoverer of these methods of dealing with the ball, and that the marker developed them. At any rate, Carr was the best player of his day, and practically, if not nominally, champion of the game.

Kentfield, who appeared about this time, and lived until 1873, was perhaps the first to assume definitely the title of champion, and must have fully deserved it, since he remained unbeaten even when challenged by that rising star from the north, John Roberts the elder. No formal test match seems ever to have been concluded between them, but of some impromptu games the senior player won two out of three. The services of the renowned "Jonathan"—as Kentfield was invariably called, though his name appears to have been Edwin—to the game were of great value. He was for a number of years proprietor of the subscription rooms at Brighton, and many of the improvements in the table and its accessories are attributed to him. He also published a work entitled "The Game of Billiards Scientifically Explained and Practically Set Forth." It is particularly interesting to note that Kentfield made great use of the spot stroke, as we now call it, and is said to have achieved on one occasion 57 consecutive winning hazards in the top pockets, his highest all-round break being 196. He also anticipated the championship table, that on which he played at Brighton having pockets reduced to three inches, while the red ball was spotted only twelve inches from the cushion.

A BILLIARD ROOM OF 1830.

After these early champions, the game very rapidly developed to its present condition. The skill of the two Roberts, father and son, Cook, Bennett, Peall, Mitchell, and several others whose names are as household words, have brought it, during the later years of the last century, to such a pitch of excellence as would seem to leave small room for improvement.

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The improvement in amateur play has likewise been very great, though the gulf between this and professional form, greater in this than in any sport or pastime, remains as wide as ever. The improvement is, indeed, remarkable, since whereas one can remember the time when there was but one amateur in the entire country credited with a hundred break, double that number has more than once been achieved in the amateur championship. Thirty years ago a run of 30 or 40 was considered quite a fine performance, but to-day many a provincial town can produce its champion, capable of making occasionally his 60 or 70, and interest in the game continues to increase.

GEORGE GRAY.

THE MODERN GAME.

By MELBOURNE INMAN,

Champion of English Billiards.

Photographs by the Sport and General Illustrations Bureau.

The evolution of scientific billiard playing makes for a most entertaining subject, and one which I have become more and more concerned in as my position in the game moved upwards. We have reached such a high state of efficiency at the present time that it is really difficult to see where and how improvement in method can come. To me the future seems to rest with the individual player himself, his precision of striking and consistency of form, plus the various scoring systems which have been exploited from time to time. The most effective exponent, as I see things, will be he who can blend these movements and ensure for himself a smooth passage amidst the snares and pitfalls which beset one on every side when a billiard "break" is in progress. There are those who may think otherwise, and point to the abnormal success achieved by the phenomenal young Australian, George Gray, with his set array of losing hazard strokes. I can only oppose their views by falling in line with them, and incidentally refer to the vogue enjoyed by the old-time prolific "spot" stroke, the utility of the now banished "push" stroke, and the practically unceasing repetition of the "cradle" cannon which bred a "break" of nearly half a million points. They were the forerunners of the notable Gray losing-hazards. Legislation curtailed their

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predominating influences, and it may be that the rules will again be amended to suit up-to-date requirements.

My billiard history always taught me that the first steps in scientific billiards were taken by a French officer, one of the survivors of Napoleon's *Grande Armée*, a Capitaine Mingaud. While in captivity in Paris, he conceived the idea of dispensing with the mace and using a leather-tipped stick, now known as a cue. The mace was an instrument with a striking head attached to a rod. It was laid upon the table and propelled against the ball just as, until a few years ago, players used the butt ends of their cues for the purpose of sending their ball straight up and down the table when they had to face a double baulk. This primitive weapon excluded the use of "side" or "screw," or those combined motions which are the life and soul of modern billiards. All that it could do was to guarantee accuracy as far as a "plain-ball" effect—simple forward rolling—was concerned. I hardly need to draw attention to the feeble control this kind of play gave to the striker. The heavy cloths, wooden beds, and list cushions further detracted from the scoring possibilities, so that it is no wonder the customary game did not exceed seven points up. Small as this number is, it stands in relative proportion to the present-day "100 up." French inventiveness brought out the innate merits of the game as detailed in a manual published by the aforementioned Capitaine Mingaud about the year 1820. Upon the foundations of this unassuming yet most illuminating treatise is reared the structure of modern billiards.

I do not know much about the first billiard champion, John Kentfield, of Brighton—not more than I have read. By all accounts he was a deep student of his art and a good practitioner. He helped the practical side along in no small degree, as regards both his doings upon the table and the excellent technical hints he gave in improved construction to the pioneer firm of Messrs. Thurston. We owe to Kentfield, I am assured, the billiard slate, thinner cloths, and, above all, perhaps, the resilient rubber cushion. The more one looks into "the Kentfield period," the clearer is his influence on the *billiard* material since provided to be noticed. He left a great legacy to the game, and endowed it with two superlative strokes in the shape of the "short-jenny" and the "spot-stroke." He was a great executant in either direction, and

JOHN ROBERTS PLAYING.

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JOHN ROBERTS *v.* NEWMAN, THE BOY CHAMPION.

not a little of his superiority can be traced to the precision, backed by that sound knowledge which is greater even than the playing instinct, he displayed in manipulating these fine break-raising elements. They made for close-range play, the cult of every first-class billiardist. At that time of day, the slowness of the cushion often conduced to a long succession of the curling "short-jennies" while not impeding the positional movements of the cue-ball in administering the spot-stroke touches and moving back to its place "behind the red."

I consider Kentfield's championship reign to have marked a time of billiard research, education, and improvement. The swing of the pendulum carried us to another extreme when the breezy and bluff John Roberts,

H. W. STEVENSON *v.* GEORGE GRAY.

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REECE *v.* INMAN.

senior—father of the present illustrious bearer of the name—entered into possession of the title in the year 1847. Old Roberts was a "double-strength" player of extraordinary powers. Every move of his showed the natural-born gift within him, and told how hard his predecessor, Kentfield, must have worked to attain to what he had.

W. A. LOVEJOY.

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Brilliancy and dash were Roberts's characteristics, just as they have been those of his greatest son, John Roberts, junior. "Power of cue" at every variety of forcing or "screw" shots, fluency of cueing at the run-throughs, and a marvellous confidence in his own abilities, kept old Roberts at the head of his profession for five-and-twenty years. Then came young William Cook—another sire of a son who has endeavoured to follow in his footsteps—with conquering mastery of the spot-stroke. The new-comer was distinguished by a dainty, effortless style of game, and exceptional proficiency at the spot-stroke. Quickly he showed himself to be a dangerous rival to the old champion. In due course a match for the championship was arranged. A three-inch pocket table—described as a "championship" table—was expected to neutralise young Cook's spot-stroke striking. But the Fates had willed it that the old order should cease, and a new era in billiards was opened when Cook, in a red-lettered struggle, covered himself with the championship mantle.

E. DIGGLE.

MELBOURNE INMAN.

Within a few months, John Roberts, junior—the John Roberts who is still a leading figure with us—had avenged his father's defeat and wrested the title from Cook. This great player's advent was destined to produce the highest quality of billiards, as regards both originality of conception and attractive exposition, that has hitherto been thought out and rendered. With the brilliant example of his father and the gentle displays of his most formidable opponent, Cook, before him, the younger Roberts gradually assimilated the styles and ideas of these great players. It was not an easy nor a short-lived process. He had his vicissitudes—those upward and downward flights which every master of his task will surely encounter while in search of the

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great consummation. But a dominant will-power triumphed over subject-matter and fashioned, in the fullness of time, the greatest human billiard-playing machine in the history of the old indoor game. Allied to his own grand talents were the best strokes, the things they had picked up from among the multitudinous positions into which the balls can shape themselves, which his father and Cook had taken stock of and considered worthy to be introduced into their extensive, ever-growing repertory. John Roberts came to his own in the early 'eighties, when he had learned by heart all that the expanding lexicon of billiards had to tell.

REECE.

C. HARVERSON.

"The father of modern billiards" is John Roberts. He lifted the billiard table from amidst unpleasant surroundings. He showed it to be what it really is—the medium of scientific recreation. The evil associations fled like demons of the night when the daylight breaks. He lived his life in the atmosphere of the billiard-room. The up-to-date "top of-the-table," with all its refinements, disappointments, light and shade, was developed by the inspired mind of John Roberts. For nearly twenty years he was *facile princeps* as its delineator, a giant among pigmies, always very conscious of his outstanding rank as a champion of champions. What is more, he always carried himself as such, and brooked no rival in his path. His personality lent a glamour to billiards which has not lost any of its lustre since the dawn of the present century, and the appearance of younger, if less glowing, planets. John Roberts was my billiard hero in the days

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FRED LINDRUM, JUNIOR.

The champion boy billiard player of Australia.

when I figured as a juvenile player. He has lost little of his fascination for me to-day. For speed, daring flights of fancy, and belief in his own ability, apart from his abnormal skill, John Roberts has written a chapter of billiards all to himself. He is the model upon which all the big billiards of the day is shaped.

In their order and place, the gifted Diggle (hardly so "pretty," maybe, in execution as in application to sound theory, with a novel outburst on occasions), Dawson (a great player who made himself what he was by undaunted patience and an ambition to succeed), and the elegant, "lightning" play of Stevenson, have carried the game a few steps further than it stood when John Roberts was its king. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, there has been much of his mentor's methods seen in the work of Stevenson—the same subtle by-play when the balls foregather at the top end of the table, and the same rapidity as Roberts owned; the same easy carriage and quick flitting from point to point of the table between the strokes. I own up to having learned something from Roberts, and again many a move from Stevenson. Their top-end tactics cannot be bettered. These form a subtle alliance of cannons and winning hazards which were once the despair and envy of myself. Only by dint of hard practice and close observation could I at all emulate this freakish play. The close-cannons of Reece and Lovejoy, telling as they were, did not make the same lasting impression upon me as the Roberts-cum-Stevenson treatment of the close-range effects around and about the billiard-spot which so baffle the spectators of the leading billiard matches by their seeming simplicity and their real difficulties.

Just when we thought that billiards had reached the apex point of its possibilities,

H. W. STEVENSON.

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with the over-cultivation of the "top-of-the-table" game, and the subservience of all other systems to its overpowering strength, there came a reaction, short, sharp, and astonishingly convincing. I refer, of course, to the unexpected demonstrations of the potentialities underlying the losing hazards when perfected in every requirement of the stroke upon, and the after-position of the object-ball as shown by George Gray. Here was another fact in the playing situation. The game stepped back nearly half a century to the epoch when the losing hazards were of a first importance. The virtues of the crystalate composition balls, in their truthful movement and regular balance, had not a little to do with this Australian invasion. The victorious career of Gray, a twenty-year-old youngster, was grudgingly received in some quarters. For myself, I acknowledge it as an incentive to the younger generation to try and achieve as great a fame. By all appearances, not a few of them are endeavouring to do so. Never were there such a host of skilled young players making their way up the ladder of fame, and we hear of lady players of such pretensions as come within measurable distance of amateur championship standard.

The George Gray exhibitions of red-ball efficacy, and the supreme worth of the losing hazards, have brought about, in my own game, a compromise style of scoring, varying between short spells at the top-of-the-table (*à la* John Roberts, Diggle, and Stevenson), and the red-ball losing hazards (in the manner of George Gray). It has served me so well as to lead me to believe honestly that the most effective scoring will now be found to rest with a similar system. Added to its effectiveness is a clear-cut, fairly "open" play, which the most modest amateur can easily keep in touch with and introduce into his own game. After all, the best for the amateur, who looks for the easiest of strokes, brings out the essence of billiards.

[EDITORIAL NOTE.—In an article on the Canterbury Cricket Week which appeared in the August WINDSOR, allusion was inadvertently made to Miss Rose Norreys as "the late" Miss Norreys. The Editor greatly regrets the mistake, and is glad to inform any of the admirers of the distinguished actress who may have been misled by it that Miss Norreys is still alive, but living in complete retirement from the stage.]

B. ELPHICK.

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THE AGREEABLE COMPANY.

By EDGAR WALLACE,

Author of "Sanders of the River," "Private Selby," "The Council of Justice," etc.

CARFEW was a man who attracted money to him by the exercise of one set of qualities, and repelled it by the employment of another set.

Money in Carfew's hands was inflammable. It went up with the flare and the roar of a kerosene refinery after the president's son—new from college, but strange to the business—had dropped his cigarette end in the basement.

Carfew came to the Grand Western Hotel with six thousand golden sovereigns standing to his credit in the L. & S. Bank.

He came in a taxicab, with a worn portmanteau and a cheque-book, and he spent a glorious week of life tearing out the little pink slips till they were all exhausted.

After which he got another cheque-book.

In the meantime he had got another portmanteau, a remarkable wardrobe, and the reputation of being an American bank robber.

"For," argued the gorgeous German hall-porter of the Grand Western, "he could not his money with such profusion spend if he had it honestly acquired."

Carfew was indifferent to the opinion of the hall-porter, being in that stage of superiority which allowed him to wear heliotrope socks without shame.

People came to see him—people who wanted to render him invaluable services. Some wished to lead him to the private road which cuts off ten miles of the dreary path to fortune; some had ideas that only wanted money.

These latter Carfew laughed to oblivion, for he had ideas of his own—and money.

His money enabled him to indulge his taste in his own particular ideas, which ran in the direction of the Burlington Arcade, and took expression in artistic cravats and socks that spoke for themselves.

It is a grand thing to be rich, to be able to write "pay bearer five thousand pounds" without running the risk of being arrested.

His vices were inexpensive. He did not drink, he was no epicure, he loved fresh air and taxicabs. Theatres could not cost him more than three guineas a week, for of all the vices to which men are victims, he was least troubled by the greatest—he had no friends.

He was dressing for dinner one night, when the valet announced a visitor.

"Show him up," said Carfew.

There came to him a tall, cadaverous man, with a profusion of hair and a certain untidiness of dress which usually marked the unsuccessful genius.

"Carfew?" he demanded.

The young man nodded.

"Your hand," demanded the other briefly. "Your name I know—I have heard of you. My name is Septimus."

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Septimus," said Carfew formally. "And what goods can we show you this evening?"

Carfew wanted amusement; he could spare this unpromising stranger at least half an hour.

"You don't mind my dressing?" he asked, as he lazily adjusted his tie before the glass.

"Not at all—not at all," said Mr. Septimus, with a fine sweep of his hand. "A busy man—I am no hog."

He seemed pleased with the negative illustration, and repeated in a whisper that he was no hog.

"Mr. Carfew," the visitor went on, "I have heard of you. You are the man who negotiated the sale of a certain patent, receiving as your share of the sale many thousands of pounds."

"That's true," said Carfew modestly; "I am best known, perhaps, as Carfew the Inventor."

"I do not know you as Carfew the Inventor," said the seedy man deliberately. "You have a title to fame more wonderful, more extraordinary, more far-reaching for humanity; you have attracted the attention of three men of gifts. Sir, will you honour us with your company this night?"

"My dear chap," said Carfew reproachfully, "to-night! Now, be reasonable."

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"To-night," said the weird-looking visitor dramatically. "It is not unreasonable, believe me."

He was very earnest, so earnest that Carfew looked at him more closely. His clothes were old and stained, his cuffs were frayed and not over-clean, his neck was innocent of collar; a black silk cravat clumsily tied in a bow left a space of scraggy throat between neckband and neckwear.

He had two days' growth of beard, and yet there was an undefinable air of refinement about him which puzzled the young man. His hands, long, thin, and white, were scrupulously tended.

"We're rather at cross purposes," said Carfew kindly. "I would do anything to oblige you except"—he was on the point of saying, "lending you money," but instinct arrested the speech—"except commit myself to a promise that I might not be able to fulfil. Now, exactly what is it you want?"

The man clicked his lips impatiently.

"I want nothing—absolutely nothing," he said, with a shade of annoyance in his voice. "I have no single desire in the world; there is no material wish which, if money could fulfil, would remain unsatisfied. Look here."

He thrust his hand into the baggy pocket of his Inverness, and drew out an untidy bundle of papers.

"You think I am a needy adventurer," he said, and it was apparent that his anger was rising; "you imagine that I have come here with some hare-brained scheme——"

"My dear sir!" said Carfew, somewhat embarrassed by the truth of the man's utterance.

"You think this—bah!"

He flung the bundle of papers into the air; they scattered on bed and floor. One fell at Carfew's feet.

"My dear chap," he expostulated, as he stooped to pick it up, "you're only——"

He stopped suddenly, for the paper he held was a Bank of England note for one hundred pounds.

There was no doubt whatever as to its genuineness.

And the floor was covered with them.

There was a round dozen on the floor, two or three on the eiderdown which covered the bed, two on the dressing-table.

Carfew, bewildered, hastened to collect them.

"Money," said the strange visitor bitterly—"money! Do we live for nothing but money? Is that the be-all and end-all of things? Is that the ultimate aim of humanity? Take it—keep it! Add it to your pony store. Tell your friends that Septimus of the Agreeable Company made you a present of it!"

He hitched his worn cloak round his shoulders and flung open the door.

"*Au revoir!*" he said haughtily. "We are not likely to meet again."

He was half-way down the corridor before Carfew recovered from his surprise.

"Hi, come back!"

Carfew darted down the corridor and caught the man by the arm.

"Come back, come back, for Heaven's sake!" he begged. "You mustn't go away and leave me with this money. I don't want the beastly stuff."

"Do you mean that?"

There was suspicion in the stranger's frowning glance.

"Absolutely. Just give me a minute."

Reluctantly the man returned, and as reluctantly he took the notes from Carfew's hand and stuffed them into his pocket.

"Count them," said the anxious young man; "one might have gone astray."

"What matters?" responded Septimus carelessly. "I shall be little worse off. Let the man who finds it keep it."

Carfew gazed on him in awe, and for the first time a faint smile played round the thin lips of the seedy visitor.

"I think," he said quietly, "you are a little astonished at my indifference to money—perhaps you think it is an affectation. The truth is, money is of the least importance to me and to the Agreeable Company. For every sovereign you possess, I have probably three hundred. That would make me more than a millionaire, wouldn't it?"

He smiled again pityingly.

"Money does not count, believe me," he said seriously. "There are three men in the Agreeable Company, and if you were to add their fortunes together, they would—But I will only say that I am the poorest of the trio."

Again there was that odd little mannerism, for he repeated, speaking to himself in a voice which was scarcely more than a whisper: "The poorest of the trio—the poorest of the trio!"

Now, Carfew was by every instinct a journalist. His very faults might be traced to this quality, for he would jump at the shadow of a "story," and miss the bone of probability.

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And here, indeed, was a story—the Agreeable Company of millionaires!

"If you could tell me exactly the object of your visit," he said, "and just how I can serve you, I am quite willing to accompany you to-night."

"Are you?"

Septimus leant forward eagerly, his eyes shining. "Are you really? Now, that is good of you! I want you to meet Decimus. You will adore Decimus. He is a man after your own heart—a brain ingenious, terrifically introspective, and with the idea."

Carfew, dazed by his tremendous character of the unknown Decimus, could only nod his head.

"The idea is the thing," the stranger went on. "I can see by your eyes that you think I am a little mad—perhaps more than a little. You think we are all a little mad!" Carfew blushed guiltily. "Ah, you do! But you shall see."

He rose, hitched up his cloak again, and smiled.

"It is now twenty-three minutes past seven by your new watch."

Carfew started and pulled out his new chronometer hastily; it was exactly twenty-three minutes past seven.

"How on earth——" he began.

The stranger was amused.

"Simple, very simple. You have a new watch—all young men who suddenly acquire wealth have new watches—and new watches keep perfect time. I know it is twenty-three minutes past because it is exactly eight minutes since the clock struck the quarter after. I know it is eight minutes because I have counted four hundred and eighty seconds. One-half of my brain is counting all the time. But that is beside the point. It is now twenty-six minutes past seven. Will you meet me in front of the National Gallery at nine o'clock?"

Carfew did not hesitate.

"I will," he said.

Septimus stood at the door.

"If you have any nervousness, if you are in any way afraid of the consequences of your adventure, I shall not complain if you come armed."

And, with a profound bow, he departed.

Carfew went down to dinner in a condition of mind which it would be difficult to analyse.

He had embarked on that variety of enterprise which is dear to a young man's heart—the enterprise which has the necessary envelopment of mystery, and the end of which could not be surmised.

He finished his dinner in half the time it usually took, hurried back to his room and changed into a tweed suit. The night was damp and chilly. It offered him an excuse for wearing an overcoat and a soft felt hat, which the remarkable character of the interview justified.

Prompt to the minute he took his stand by the steps leading up to the National Gallery. The clocks were striking nine, when a big motor-car, driven slowly from the direction of Pall Mall, drew up, and the stranger got out.

By the light of a street standard, Carfew recognised him, though he might have been excused if he had not.

For now Septimus was a radiant being. Dressed in an evening-suit of perfect cut, his long hair trimmed and brushed, his lean, intellectual face innocent of scrubbiness, he was the pattern of propriety.

He came quickly toward Carfew, and held out his hand.

"I am one minute late," he said; "these clocks are slow."

Carfew suddenly realised his own wilful shabbiness.

"I am afraid I have changed my kit," he said, and felt unaccountably sheepish.

Septimus smiled.

"Please don't bother," he said, and held open the door of the car. "Decimus is no hog, either."

Carfew sank back into the luxurious cushions as the car glided noiselessly across Trafalgar Square, and tried to adjust his whirling thoughts.

"I suppose," said his companion, who seemed possessed of a fiendish power which allowed him to read men's minds, "that you are mentally quoting Mr. Pickwick when he found himself in the middle of the night chasing the electric Jingle and the erring sister of Mr. Wardle."

He had put off his eccentric style of address with his seedy costume, and Carfew noted that his voice was soft and cultured. All the extravagance of attitude and language had disappeared. He spoke easily, fluently of men and things, the news of the day, touching lightly on politics, merely observing that the trend of recent legislation seemed to be in the direction of Socialism. He thought that such legislation was bad for property. It did not affect him, he said; all his money was fluid capital. This was an astonishing statement, for Carfew had never heard of a man whose wealth was so placed.

"I lend money," the other explained—

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"short loans, you know. It means a quick profit. I would not do this but for Octavius, who is the mortal enemy of laziness. He says that idle money does more mischief than idle men. What a brain that man has—what a brain!"

It was a return of the old enthusiasm, and Carfew waited, but Septimus said no more.

The car had crossed Westminster Bridge, had passed through the tangle of traffic at the Elephant and Castle, sped swiftly along the gloomy stretch of the New Kent Road into the bustle of the Old Kent Road.

Not another word said Septimus, and Carfew was content to engage himself with his own thoughts. They were climbing the steep hill that leads to Blackheath when Septimus again spoke.

"I have only one request to make to you," he said, "and that is that you do not make any mention of the Straits Settlements to Decimus."

"The——?" asked Carfew, not a little bewildered.

"The Straits Settlements," said the other calmly. "It is the one subject upon which I fear the otherwise perfectly-poised brain of the good Decimus is not too delicately adjusted."

It seemed a subject easy to avoid, and Carfew said as much. The other nodded gravely.

The car flew up the steep hill, turned to the right, and began skirting the heath. Half-way round it slowed and turned into some grounds through two gaunt gates, along a short, dark avenue of trees, and pulled up before the gloomy door of a big house.

There was no light in any window; even the hall was in darkness.

The two men descended, and Septimus, mounting the steps, rang the bell—Carfew heard its far-away tinkle.

They waited a little time before the door was opened. The only light in the hall was the candle held by the man who had admitted them.

As the door closed upon them, Carfew became conscious of the magnificence of the servitor who held the light.

He was a footman of imposing proportions. Clean-shaven, with a quiet dignity of mien, he wore a livery such as the personal attendant of a reigning monarch might have adopted. His coat was of royal blue velvet, thickly laced with gold, his breeches were of white satin, his stockings of rose-pink silk. On his feet he wore the shiniest of patent shoes, adorned with jewelled buckles that flashed back the light of the candle as only diamonds can. His hair was powdered white, the whitest of snowy ruffles were at his wrists, the most snowy of cravats at his throat; across his breast he wore a string of medals such as the domestics of royal households wear.

Carfew noted the blue and white of the British House, the yellow and scarlet of Spain, the diagonal stripe of the German, the green and yellow of Austria.

"Messieurs Decimus and Octavius await your Excellencies," said the man, and his voice had exactly the quality of humility which his office demanded.

Septimus nodded.

He handed his coat to the man, and Carfew followed suit.

Now, it must be said of Carfew that he was not easily overcome by outward show. He was by instinct and training a journalist, and no journalist permits himself to be impressed. Yet there was something awe-inspiring in the spectacle of that gorgeous lackey in the unfurnished hall.

The dim light of the candle accentuated the desolation of the place. A huge black stairway led to the upper floors. The hall itself was innocent of chair or table, yet the candlestick in the footman's white hand was of silver and most beautifully designed.

The footman led the way along the passage till they came to a door which evidently opened into a room at the rear of the house.

He knocked, and a gruff, grumpy voice said: "In!"

The man opened the door and entered.

"Mr. Carfew and Monsieur Septimus!" he announced.

Carfew followed him.

The room, unlike the hall, was furnished, but such furniture!

It proclaimed its origin loudly.

It was frantically, garishly new, it was painfully common. "Hire purchase" was written on every stick of it, from the saddle-bag suite to the fumed oak sideboard.

In the centre was a table draped by a blood-red cloth, and at this table, one on either side, were two men, who rose as Carfew entered. The first was stout, a fact emphasised by his costume, for he wore tight-fitting evening-dress, with black satin knickers and black silk stockings. He was clean-shaven, and his white hair was brushed smoothly back from a low forehead.

"Mr. Carfew," he said courteously, and extended a fat hand that blazed with brilliant rings, "this is indeed an honour."

His voice was a musical growl, and as he

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spoke, he blinked continuously as one whose vision is slightly defective.

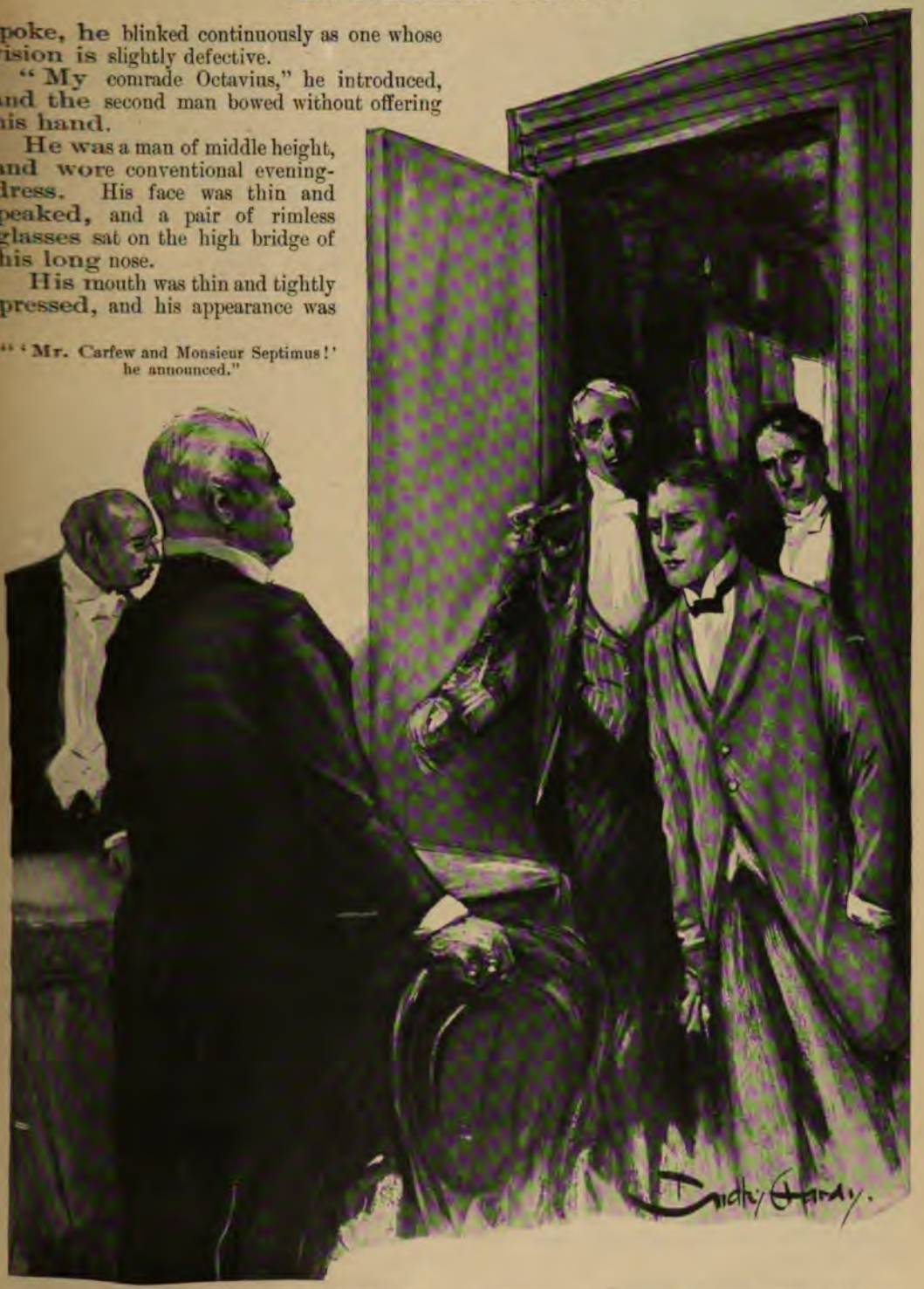
"My comrade Octavius," he introduced, and the second man bowed without offering his hand.

He was a man of middle height, and wore conventional evening-dress. His face was thin and peaked, and a pair of rimless glasses sat on the high bridge of his long nose.

His mouth was thin and tightly pressed, and his appearance was not improved by the fact that his head was clipped as closely as any convict's.

"Honour!" he repeated automatically, and, without removing his eyes from Carfew, put his hand behind him and groped for a chair.

"'Mr. Carfew and Monsieur Septimus!' he announced."



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"Sit down, sit down," said Septimus, the most human of the three, Carfew thought.

There was an awkward pause as the young man took his place at the table.

Again the only light was that afforded by candles. There were seven candles, and they were inserted in a golden candelabra that stood in the centre of the table.

Carfew observed that whilst the stout Decimus and his guide gave their whole attention to him in the subsequent conversation, the melancholy Octavius stared steadily, uneasily, almost apprehensively at the burning tapers.

"Mr. Carfew"—the stout man clasped his glittering hands together and leant forward over the table—he sat opposite to Carfew—"you may wonder why we have sought you out, and why we have invited you to our poor dwelling?"

Carfew nodded, and Decimus repeated the nod. So, too, did Septimus, and even the other man absently jerked his head.

Decimus smoothed a newspaper cutting that lay under his hand.

"I read," he said, "that great interest has been created in City circles by a deal which the brilliant young journalist, Felix Carfew—I am quoting the cutting—made on behalf of Colonel Withington, the inventor. The paragraph goes on to say—

"'The advent of a financial genius is an event which should not be passed unnoticed. We understand that Mr. Carfew cleared a profit of twenty thousand pounds on the transaction.'"

He folded up the paper and looked at Carfew, and the financial genius nodded again, without shame.

"These interesting facts," Decimus went on, speaking slowly and deliberately, "appeared in *The South-West Herald*, and I do not doubt that you wrote the paragraph yourself."

Carfew felt himself blushing, and was annoyed.

"I do not doubt," Decimus proceeded gravely, "that twenty thousand pounds was a pardonable exaggeration, and that you made no more than six thousand pounds out of the transaction."

Carfew wriggled uncomfortably, but was saved the embarrassment of an immediate reply by Octavius, who, with sudden acerbity, demanded—

"Must we have seven candles?"

"I think so," said Decimus gently.

"Seven candles all burning at once?" asked the other, with a show of irritation.

"It is a big room, Octavius," soothed Septimus.

"These candles cost twopence each," the obstinate Octavius protested. "Fourteenpence! Can't I put one out?"

"I think we will keep the whole burning, if you will allow us," said Decimus firmly.

Octavius muttered something about "ruin," and continued his gloomy survey of the candelabra.

"If you will allow me to say so," said Carfew, "I can't see how the authorship of that paragraph or the truth of its contents——"

"Has anything to do with me, eh?" Decimus smiled broadly. He had a large face, and Nature had afforded him generous provision for making his amusement visible. "That may not be apparent to you, Mr. Carfew."

He was intensely earnest of a sudden.

"Mr. Carfew, if I handed you securities for a million and a half pounds—securities which I could realise, and you could realise in twenty-four hours—would you undertake to initiate on our behalf a daily newspaper?"

To say that Carfew was stricken dumb with the proposal is to adequately convey his emotions; that which would deprive him of speech was no ordinary proposal.

And it was the dream of Carfew's life to initiate a London newspaper. It is the dream of every well-balanced journalist's life.

There is no journal that was ever printed that the average newspaper man could not improve upon. And the million and a half pounds!

Why, one could do anything with that sum! One could produce a paper that would influence Olympians. The best writers of the day and hour would write for it; its columns could be filled with the genius, the wisdom, and the wit of the language. There should be a Blowitz in every capital; he would make exorbitant charges to advertisers.

"Would I undertake it?" he said huskily. "Yes, I think I would."

Octavius, staring the flames of the candles out of countenance, spoke without relaxing his attention.

"Would he undertake to steadfastly castigate—you know?"

He nodded mysteriously.

Septimus looked at Decimus imploringly.

"May we say it?" he asked.

Decimus frowned and pursed his lips.

"Yes," he said, with a touch of bitterness in his voice.

"Would you undertake to show up the

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Straits Settlements Affair?" asked Septimus in a whisper.

Darker and darker grew the cloud on the brow of stout Decimus.

"I can't bear it," he said harshly. "Do not use those words again, I beg of you—say 'S.S.' I thought I was strong enough. Don't do it, Sep—don't do it, dear lad!"

He covered his face with his hands.

"My dear Decimus," said the other, greatly concerned, "I'm so sorry! I am a brute!"

It was some time before Decimus recovered his self-possession.

"The question we have to ask you," said Septimus, speaking quickly, "is this: If we hand you to-morrow the sum of one and a half million pounds, are you prepared to found and edit such a paper? Secondly, will you undertake that such a journal shall be in the hands of the public three months from to-day?"

"I am," said Carfew, with the alacrity of a small boy offered his first ride on a locomotive.

"This candle is quite unnecessary," interrupted the distressed Octavius; "let me, I beg of you, extinguish it."

He raised a little snuffer imploringly.

"Seven candles!" he muttered, with an angry sniff. "It is a monstrous waste!" Then of a sudden he checked himself. "Security," he said shortly, and turned his head to his companion—"ask him about security."

"My dear Octavius!" Decimus was reproachful.

"It is an elementary safeguard, an elementary precaution," persisted the other doggedly. "He may be a man of substance—he may not be. A million and a half is a lot of money; people would say that we were mad, not knowing about the S.S. I insist upon some form of security."

"I protest!" Decimus was very angry, but Carfew had now recovered his grip of the situation.

"I think Mr. Octavius is perfectly justified," he said. "I have security up to six thousand pounds, but beyond that I can promise nothing."

"More than enough, and altogether unnecessary — altogether unnecessary," said Decimus shortly. "You agree, Septimus?"

Carfew's guide nodded.

"I should certainly not have asked Mr. Carfew here if I had any idea that such a thing would have been demanded," he said shortly.

Octavius, in disgrace, returned to a contemplation of the candles, but from his tightly-pressed lips Carfew gathered that the little man was obdurate.

"Let him come to-morrow with six thousand pounds," he said obstinately, "and I will hand him my share."

There was another uncomfortable silence.

"To-morrow night I shall be here," said Carfew, with a smile, and rose.

"It is altogether unnecessary," said Septimus again, rather angrily. "I am humiliated, Octavius—humiliated, Decimus."

He accompanied Carfew from the room.

Near the door stood the gorgeous footman patiently standing, candlestick in hand.

"One moment." Septimus caught the young man by the sleeve and drew him out of hearing.

"If you have any difficulty," he said in a low voice, "cash this." He handed an oblong slip to the other. It bore an almost undecipherable signature, and was a blank cheque on the Bank of England. "Fill in the amount you want up to fifty thousand," he said, "but do not, I beg of you, give a hint to Octavius that I have done this. He is—er—a little eccentric."

Carfew pushed back the cheque smilingly.

"You know the amount I can guarantee," he said. "Thank you a thousand times for your generosity, but it is unnecessary."

"Take it," urged Septimus, and thrust it into Carfew's hand.

To humour him, Carfew accepted the cheque.

In a few minutes he was being driven back to London alone.

His brain was in a whirl; he could not think consecutively. Only he realised that a dream, a wild, extravagant dream, was to be realised. He would call the paper *The Monitor*. It should be the last word in up-to-date journalism. He would offer the foreign editorship to Macraltan, who had been so decent to him on *The Megaphone*. He would ask the great G.S.B. to do the dramatic criticism.

It was nearly three o'clock in the morning before he fell asleep. He breakfasted in bed, and in the midst of the meal the waiter told him that a gentleman wished to see him.

"Show him up," said Carfew.

He expected to see Septimus, and was disappointed to find that his visitor was a complete stranger. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, with a brown, clean-shaven face and a twinkling eye.

Carfew looked at the card the waiter had brought. "T. B. Smith," it ran.

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"Well, Mr. Smith?" said Carfew.

The visitor seated himself by the side of the bed.

"Well, Mr. Carfew," he smiled, "they tell me that you are going to organise a big engineering work."

Carfew's puzzled frown was the reply.

"Or a paper, perhaps?" hazarded the other.

Carfew nodded.

"I haven't the slightest idea how you came to know," he said, "or why you should have thought it was an engineering work."

The tall man laughed.

"You have been associated with newspapers and with inventions, you know," he exclaimed. "Anyway, what I want to ask you is, do you want a manager?"

The young man regarded him suspiciously.

"I am afraid matters are not sufficiently advanced," he said coldly, "to justify my making any arrangement with you."

"Aren't they?" Mr. Smith was disappointed, and did not conceal the fact. "I'm sorry. I'm used to managing big affairs. I've had control of a company with a capital of fifty thousand."

Carfew smiled a superior smile at the ceiling.

"My dear old chap," he said tolerantly, "you talk of fifty thousand as though it were all the money in the world. Now, *I* purpose spending that amount in a month."

He impressed Mr. Smith, and was gratified.

The visitor rose. "I see, sir," he said respectfully, "I'm not much good to you. Yet you might want an assistant. You are very young."

Now, there was nothing that annoyed Carfew more than to be told in a certain tone of voice that he was very young, and that was exactly the tone the visitor adopted.

"I am old enough to know how to spend money," he said shortly.

"I suppose there is no chance?" Mr. Smith said, fingering his broad-brimmed hat. "Perhaps, when the business is settled in a week's time——"

"It will be settled to-day," replied Carfew, "and, as far as you and I are concerned, you may regard it as settled now."

That ended the interview.

Carfew was a little puzzled as to how the story of the new venture had leaked out. But he had little time to waste in idle speculation. He saw his banker that morning, drew out the greater part of his balance, and spent the afternoon sketching out the shape and substance of the new journal.

He paid a lightning visit to Fleet Street, and decided that, wherever the temporary offices of the paper should be, the permanent *Monitor* building should be erected on the island site of the Strand.

He found time to read up the Straits Settlements, and was surprised to learn that the Government of the colony was a singularly inoffensive one. At nine o'clock the motor called at his hotel.

This time it was Decimus who welcomed and accompanied him.

The reason for the substitution Decimus explained. He felt that he owed Carfew an apology.

"Septimus has told me that he gave you a blank cheque," he explained. "I hope you have used it—I trust you have used it. It was so like Septimus, so delicate, so thoughtful."

"As a matter of fact, I haven't," admitted Carfew. "I never intended using it, though it was most kind of you both."

"Not used it? Sorry — very sorry!" Decimus shook his head sadly. "I am annoyed with Octavius. He is—how shall I put it in justice to him?—a leetle mean, eh?"

Carfew grinned. Octavius was a mean little skunk, yet his character was consistent with his wealth, if Carfew knew anything about millionaires.

They arrived at the house, and were ushered into the gaunt hall by the identical footman. His uniform was now of orange, heavily braided with rich black mohair.

"Ha, you notice Charles, eh?" said Decimus, smiling. "Different uniform every day; that's a fad of Octavy's, dear lad. More expensive than candles, eh?" He chuckled.

He received a warm welcome from Septimus and a chilly one from Octavius, now in a condition of abject misery, for two golden candelabras were set on the table, and each had seven candles burning recklessly.

Carfew plunged straight away into business. He produced his rough sketches, his memoranda, the scheme of publication.

They discussed the matter dispassionately. Septimus suggested a correspondent at Constantinople. He would be expensive, but he was worth the money. Decimus would like paper of a certain quality, and Carfew said that it would cost a little more than he had estimated for. Then——

"Guarantees," said the sharp voice of Octavius.

"Take no notice," whispered Decimus. But Carfew put his hand into his inside pocket

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and produced a roll of notes. He pushed them along the table to Octavius.

"These are my guarantees," he said simply.

Octavius took the roll, smoothed it flat, and counted the notes with great deliberation.

"Six thousand," he said. He held one up to the light. "Good!" he grunted. "I will apply the test."

Carfew met the good-natured smile of Decimus.

"Humour him," whispered the stout man.

Very slowly Octavius rose from the table, and as slowly walked to the door, muttering to himself.

He had no need to open the door. It was opened for him by a tall, strong man, who stepped into the room with a whimsical smile on his face.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said the stranger genially.

Carfew recognised him as the impertinent visitor of the morning.

No word said Septimus, Octavius, or Decimus.

"Pleasant evening," said the smiling intruder. "You know me, Tony!"

Octavius gave a sickly smile.

"I know you, Mr. Smith," he said—"it's a cop!"

"A fair cop," said T. B. Smith, of Scotland Yard, vulgarly. "I want you three. My men have got your gorgeous pal. You've got some money, I think, belonging to this gentleman. Thank you . . . if you don't mind."

With a dexterity born of practice, he snapped a pair of handcuffs on the delicate wrists of Octavius.

"You're the only dangerous man of the bunch, Tony," said Mr. Smith in extenuation. "Now, then, if you are all ready, I will run you down to Blackheath Hill Station in your own car."

* * * * *

"The fact of it is, Mr. Carfew," explained the detective, "I could have saved you the undesirable publicity of this case, only I did not want to spoil the coup. Those three friends of yours are confidence tricksters. They work for big money, and are always prepared to spend a thousand to get six. They played on your imagination with their mysteries, their millions."

"I am a perfect howling jackass!" said the crestfallen Carfew.

"You are very young," said the detective, and Carfew was unaccountably annoyed.

THE PASSING OF SUMMER.

SWEET Summer lies a-dying on her throne—
A throne of flowers, where she, a flower o'erblown,
Droops sadly her incomparable head,
To gaze, a dying queen, on subjects dead.

Yet once again she lifts rebellious eyes,
Reluctant still to leave such happy skies;
She sees the restless swallows glancing by,
And knows the time has come when she must die.

She does not weep or moan, but silent grieves,
And lays her passionate heart among the leaves,
Which straightway fall to earth, trailing blood-red:
Summer is dying, is dying—is dead.

ELIZABETH CLEMENT.

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THE EMIGRATION OF MARY HENNESSY.

BY GERALD VILLIERS-STUART.

BECAUSE it was in a fishing village, Glory Lane turned its back to the ocean; only the thunder of the waves against the sea-wall reminded the inhabitants of the element which gave them their daily bread, and sometimes in payment took away a life.

The lane turned its back on the Atlantic, and its single row of cottages faced the hill—the hill over which an unseen hand had flung a mantle of purple and gold—purple heather fresh from the loom of the earth, and golden gorse new and glittering from its mints, not like the tarnished gold of the thatched roofs above the whitewashed walls of Glory Lane.

The lane was feverish with excitement this morning; even the poultry which picked up a precarious living in the roadway, and the ducks which waddled and flopped in the gutter, seemed to be infected. For the moment Glory Lane forgot that it was only the second-best street in Knockanore, and ceased to remember that Barrack Street was ennobled by the public-house, the shop, and the police barracks.

The Widow Hennessy's cottage was the centre of the convulsion. Men and women came in and out of it, children clustered in front of it, stout housewives, leaning out over the half doors to talk to one another, jerked their thumbs towards the residence of the Widow Hennessy.

Mary, her daughter, a fine lump of a girl, with glowing cheeks and lustrous, well-trimmed eyes, went eagerly up and down the street with a letter in her hand, stopping to show it to one, then whirling round to accommodate another with the sight; but all the time she was moving towards a fixed objective—the cottage of Biddy Maloney.

Biddy rested her hands on the tub of water in which she was washing an enormous quantity of potatoes for the family dinner. "Arrah, wisha, wisha! And is it to Ameriky you're off?" she cried, as Mary dashed in breathlessly. "And is it Pathrick James is afther sending ye the passage? And what will yer mother—the poor woman—do widout ye, or spare ye at all, a houseful of young childer, and himself dead and gone this long while? And is it the letther ye have in yer hand?" she went on, at the same time vigorously wiping her face in the folds of her blue-and-white check apron, and coming to look over Mary's shoulder as the girl read, punctuating with sundry sounds peculiar to herself.

"And whin is the ship for sailing?" asked Biddy, having finished her inspection of the New York draft. "And what'ull Denny Flynn be saying?"

"In four weeks' time from this very day," returned Mary, with a toss of her head; "and, shure, 'tis nothing to me what Denny Flynn'll be saying."

"Ai, yer, yer! The poor bhoy!" muttered the sympathetic Biddy Maloney.

Having exhausted the possibilities of Glory Lane in the way of exciting gossip, Mary returned to her mother's cottage to discuss with her the practical details of her outfit for America.

America! She turned the word over and over in her mouth as though it were some extra highly-flavoured morsel of confectionery. To this child of a sundered race, whose materially properous portion was beyond the seas, the word embraced in one harmonious whole everything which neared perfection—it represented a land of promise, an Eldorado, thickly gemmed with blessings which were beyond the power of even her eager brain to define. Four words alone stood out clear from the joyous confusion of possibilities—"money, style, life, and high society."

"I'm in dread Patsy never sent money enough, mother," she complained, as she ticked off on her fingers the trousseau demanded for her transmigration. "There'll be a picture hat needed for Sundays, the feathers that big they'd be blinding you with the curl of them. A three-quarter coat, a pair of yeller boots wid high heels an' a noise in them, and, shure, I shall have to have a blouse wid no neck to it, and wid arms bare from the elbow down, like Kate Ducey had in the summer, afther coming from Canning Town on the *Hudson*. And mustn't I get

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some jewlerries to go round me throat, a gould ring, and spanners for me two arms?"

"Well, thin, Maureen Alannah," replied Mrs. Hennessy, "I'd wait till ye gits out there, me darling, for I heerd tell you'd git the most lorvely rale gould jewlerries out there for little more than the price of a pint of porter over here; and 'tis thrue, they tells me, that you'd git a foine ring for two-and-six, and a rale sthamped best quality gould one for five shillings, and that same wid the grandest dimond ever made sthuck in the middle."

"And a motor-cap, mother," continued the girl, whose mind was more occupied with the coveted articles than the cheapest way of attaining them, "and a veil to tie it on with the way it wouldn't be blowing away. Then there's the neighbours. We'll have to give them all 'the night,' and have a dacent 'wake,' and 'tis meself that have a mind for dancin' ever and always. And I think I'll be happening down Barrack Street to see what they're sayin' of it there; 'tis no doubt the talk of all Knockanore by now."

"True for you, Mary, but let yez put your shawl about your head the way the wind won't be giving you the neuralgy."

"Indeed I will not, mother. Shure, haven't I done with shawls from this time on? It's the way I must be practisin' having style in me."

Mrs. Hennessy accepted her daughter's superior airs as a matter of course, for wasn't the girl going emigrating, and thereby in as elevated a position as though she was slowly and importantly dying?

There were others who bore less meekly with Mary Hennessy's airs. Old Mike Tobin, for instance, sitting on a huge heap of stones, with his back to the sea-wall, breaking up the rocks for road metal, threw cold water over the girl's red-hot excitement with his first remark.

"Be cripes," he said, cracking a pebble in two with a blow of his little hammer, "ye're better off as ye are!" His shrewd, knotty old face, which was clean-shaven once a month, became reminiscent, for he had been in the States. "Shure, isn't comfort and aise at home better than slaving and dragging out there in the cold and the hate?" He pointed back over his shoulder to the Atlantic. "Ye're a fine lump of a girl, Mary, well able for the farm work; one of the bhoys might take ye widout the fortune at all."

"Indade, Mike, and who would be a fit match for me? I'd have none of the bhoys around here—they're too backward and ignorant for the likes of me."

Mike looked at her, and the most consummate actor could not have reproduced the look of utter scorn and sarcasm expressed on his scrubby, unshaven countenance as he answered—

"And where was ye rared at all, at all? In a drawn-room, was it, sitting down all day doing a little fal-lal, and so forth? There's many a girl would be glad to have the chanst of that tidy little house and bit of land over"—nodding his head in the direction of Denny Flynn's farmhouse across the bay. "And, shure, 'tis thrue, I hear"—sinking his voice to a confidential whisper—"that he's cract about ye."

If the poor old man had accused her of some heinous offence, he could not possibly have caused a greater hurricane of disapprobation. At first she could not speak, so great was her righteous fury; she seemed actually to grow taller and broader, and to tower over him in perfectly gigantic form.

"Yirra, man, is it have Denny Flynn above? Is it have that feller you'd have me? Is it taken lave of your sinses you have, or is it the ould age coming on you is getting into your head? To have the likes of him! What do you take me for, Mike Tobin, at all, at all? He'll be no match for me. A common, ignorant farmer, who surely to goodness only washes his face to go to Mass on a Sunday! To be dhragging and tearing and shlaving all day long, up to me ankles in dirt, boiling turnips, boiling spuds, feeding the pigs, and working out on the land—shure, 'tis a dog's life, and 'tisn't what I was rared with, or was accustomed to, me that have a foine, dacent home, to sit down in like a lady when I loikes."

"Arrah, whisht, gurl dear—will ye whisht? And what, in the name of fortune, is the pride ye have? Or how do ye all forgets the way ye was rared, is a muracle to me. Don't I know—and why shouldn't I?—how ye and the ten of ye was rared—begorra, not only ye, but the father before ye, and his father before him again, in that same house? And wasn't it in the one room ye was all rared? And often did I go to call on your poor father—may Heaven have mercy on his soul!—when the two of us was working together over at Pat Hickie's, at the time of the harvest, and every jack one of ye was sitting round a big pot of stirabout. And had ye e'er a spoon? Faith, ye had not, but ating out of yer fingers, and glad enough if ye got a sup of sour buttermilk to drink wid it. So what's the

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good of all your talk, when I knows better?"

"Me, indeed!" she answered scornfully. "You'd take the prize any day at an examination! 'Tis you have the memory, for ye recalls things that never even happened, and 'tis a pity they didn't make a school-teacher of ye! Such scholars the country never did see, if you'd only been one instead of breaking stones! But 'tisn't I was rared so, Mike Tobin, for all your talk." And she flounced away in search of more sympathetic society.

It was the day before Mary's departure, and the preparations for the wake were at last complete. There was a tierce of porter, some wine for the ladies, and tea and lemonade for those who were "pledged."

"Have ye asked Denny Flynn?" queried her mother, who was putting on the potatoes to boil. "He has great life in him, and 'tis a beautiful step dancer. He is like the father afore him; you'd live and die looking at him. And he has the loveliest voice, too—'tis grand to listen to him."

Her daughter tossed her head. "'Deed, then I had a mind to lave him out—that fellow's a deal too saucy—but, faith, I had to ax him in spite of myself, since he lends us the machine to thrash the handful of barley we had, and, if I didn't, I'd be in dhread he'd have it in for us; and, indade, to tell ye the honest thruth, only for your sakes, I'd have passed out his door, and also I wouldn't have it said—and me gone to-morrow—that I left him out."

"Well, thin, Maureen, I'm glad ye did. And wouldn't it be hard on us to get the refuse the next time we went for the machine? And I wouldn't wish it for a guinea we did, and 'twould spend the whole day doing it with the hand."

"Shure, isn't it telling ye that's the reason I axed him this very minute, and only for that? And that he do dance the reel and jig something lovely, Denny would never put one foot before the other inside this house, I'm telling ye, nor Mike Tobin either, only he's an old man, and he haven't long for this world, and we might as well give him a bit of a glow while he's in it, for 'twas only a few weeks back he was saucy enough himself to me, and——"

"And what did he say to you at all, at all?"

"Never you mind what he said," replied Mary, colouring; "but I gave him a piece of me mind, and I'm thinking he won't be so handy with his tongue in future. Mother," she said, abruptly changing the subject, "I wonder will Denny Flynn be taking up wid Peggy Ryan when I'm gone? She's bould enough to up and ask him."

"Is it that slip of gurl, wid her airs and her graces," replied Mrs. Hennessy, unconsciously imitating Peggy's genteel way—"she that couldn't lift a pot of spuds off the fire? Denny has more sense, I'm thinking. He's the finest man in these parts, and you'd be the lucky gurl to get him, with his five milking-cows, his pigs, and his poultry, to say nothing of his 'congested' turkey gobbler." It was thus that the birds distributed by the congested Districts Board were known in Knockanore.

Mary's luxuriant black hair shifted perceptibly with the vehement toss she gave to her head. "Is it him? Shure, I wouldn't take him if he was the last on earth! But it's sorry to see him caught by a wake-whimpering object like Peggy Ryan I'd be."

Mary continued for some time to reassert her indifference to Denny in every possible combination of words, while her mother, refusing to argue the point, manipulated the tea. Mrs. Hennessy dropped several tears upon the tea-leaves as she peered into the pot to see if the quantity was adequate.

"Niver again will ye be drinkin' tay-water out of the ould pot, Maureen!" she sobbed, as she turned the wheel which worked the bellows beneath the floor-level fireplace. "'Tis I'll be the lonesome woman this time to-morrow!"

"Wisha, never mind, mother! Won't I be home in two years' time to see ye all, and maybe married to one of them millionaires? And now that I think of it, mother," she exclaimed impetuously, "don't make a show of me at the station, by crying and carrying on—for 'tis common and ill-bred to be rising an uproar—but be nice and quiet and aisy, like the quality is when they goes away. Say good-bye and be off-hand, and things like that, and then walk off, and no more about it—not the way you drew the whole town on us the day Paddy was going."

"Faith, I minds the day well," replied Mrs. Hennessy. "Since the day I buried your father, I never roared and screeched so much in my loife. Shure, only for poor Hannah Nolan, I'd be stretched in the grave meself! Och, lave me alone! Don't I remember it well? 'Mrs. Hinnessy,' I can hear Hannah saying—'Mrs. Hinnessy, I besaches ye to peaceify yourself in the name of Heaven, and a houseful of childer wid ye!'"

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Bright lights were burning in the Hennessy's cottage that night, and, if you had passed it between nine and ten o'clock, you might have seen the guests arrive. Shawn O'Neill had already put in an appearance, with his magic penny whistle stuck in the breast-pocket of his coat, and was greeted most effusively by the mistress of the house.

"Arrah, Shawn, me bould hero, shure I believe 'tis dance meself I will whin I hears you rising a tune, and 'tis you can do it illigant."

"Be cripes, bhoys, 'tis ye were great entirely to come in all the ways from the mountain! And how did ye make your way at all, and the night as black as the divil's cat?" This was addressed to the Mulcahys, who had driven their donkey and cart from the mountain, which, by the people dwelling in the village, was considered a wild and impossible abode.

"'Tis nothing," replied the sporting Mulcahy. "Why wouldn't we come to bid the good-bye to herself before she laves the——"

Further words were stricken off the speaker's lips by the vision of Mary herself emerging from "the room."

She wore a low-necked white dress, "for all the world," as Biddy Maloney exclaimed, "like quality look when they're stripped for a dance."

"Wisha, wisha, but Maureen is grand entirely!" whispered Mrs. Cafferty to the jealous Peggy Ryan, drawing attention to Mary's necklaces and bangles. "A row of jewlerries, and then the skin of her neck, and some more jewlerries, and another bit of her neck! But 'tis a quare fashion, and I'd get me death out of it if I was dressed out that same, wid me shoulders exposed; and, indade, 'twas often I wondered how the ladies ever lived through it all, as I saw them once through the windows of the Great House."

She had barely delivered herself of this little speech, when a tremendous noise was heard outside—shouting, talking, laughing, and general excitement—for who should have just driven up on an outside car but Dennis Flynn and the ould mother? "You'd think he was a gintleman, the great grandeur of him," said Biddy Maloney.

Other remarks also flew round, such as: "Begorra, he's a lovely man!" "Do ye see the white cuffs? And, glory, look at the crease in his trousers!" "Faith, you'd think 'twas going to be married he was. And why not? Shure, isn't the bride all made ready for him? Maureen Hennessy, no less. Wouldn't they look something beautiful at the altar?"

And Mary, looking at him, wondered whether America itself could duplicate such grandeur, and whether she had not underestimated the possibilities of her native Knockanore. She noted Peggy Ryan bridle up to Denny, and set her teeth and half hated the pair of them for spoiling her American wake.

It was easy for her to dislike the simpering, artificial Peggy, but difficult for her to maintain the same feeling for the splendid young peasant, with his long Spanish features and lithe, muscular figure.

Then Mary's better self accused her of the same artificiality which she condemned in the other girl, and told the foolish, coltish part of her that Denny looked twice as well in his white homespun shirt and soft black caubeen as he looked in these would-be smart clothes, which he seemed to be wearing like a fancy dress. She thought of his strong muscles at play under his working clothes, as he loaded his cart with seaweed on the beach, and his joyous young voice exclaiming: "The storm wrack's grand to-day, and there's nothing will get the betther of the land like the sayweed, Mary."

There was seaweed now riding to the beach; she could hear the thunder of the waves which carried it ashore. They carried more than the seaweed; they carried a message of unrest to the heart of the girl—the waves or Denny Flynn, she knew not which. But when he came demanding the first dance, she put her hand, trembling and submissive, on the arm of the man, and he led her out.

"Let ye give us room till Miss Hennessy and meself leads off," he cried, "and give us 'The Wind That Shakes the Barley,' ye blackguards!" he shouted at Shawn O'Neill and the fiddler.

Mary danced as she had never danced before. For a moment she and Denny had the floor to themselves, while the others looked on enraptured. Then, catching the infection, and with wild Irish whirroos, they seized their partners and joined the dance.

With laughter and mirth and stamping of feet, they rollicked through the night, forgetful of the toil of yesterday and to-morrow, and Denny Flynn was the hero of the hour. It was he who drew the porter barrel, he it was who handed the wine and lemonade to the ladies, started all the dances and the

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various songs, and he it was who led and kept up the applause.

Wilder and wilder grew the fun, and Peggy noticed that Denny Flynn hardly danced with any girl except Mary. It was almost a relief to her when she found that Mary and Denny Flynn had suddenly absented themselves from the wake.

Denny Flynn had led the girl out, and over the purple hill to where its farthest slope ended in the cliffs above the Atlantic.

"I'd a word to say to ye, Maureen, before ye crossed that," he said, pointing to the moonlit expanse below. Some sheep browsed near them among the heather, and far out to sea a liner—emigrant filled—trailed its smoke across the silvered water, otherwise the man and the girl were alone with the stars.

"And what could ye have to say to me, Denny, which couldn't be said in the house below?" asked Mary in a strangely subdued voice.

"To let ye know ye're the girl I've chosen, Maureen—to ask would ye marry me? That's why I brought ye here, away from the house and the fooleries."

"Why would ye be wantin' to marry me, Denny? What fortune have I?" asked the girl. Even now she had little thought of marrying him, but she wanted to be assured that she was loved by a man.

"'Tis the way I have a great wish for ye, Maureen. 'Tis the way I can't help wanting ye, for all the young foolery that's in your head, and for all that ye'd bring no fortune to the farm. Ye're just the woman I want, and don't know why, except that I want ye. Me mother says you're flippant and wayward, with notions in your head, and I cannot say her nay. I just tell her, Maureen, as I'm telling it to you, that I want you—I want you. And, shure, I wouldn't be wanting you to live with me ever and always if there wasn't somewhere a woman in ye, hiding behind the wild colt of a gurl. It isn't the lad in me, Maureen, speaking to the colleen; 'tis the man beyant talking to the woman."

"Do ye love me enough, Denny, to cross that with me?" she asked, pointing to the ocean at their feet.

"'Tis the way I love ye too much to cross it with ye, Maureen."

"Then why did ye let me go before ye told me how ye wanted me, Denny?"

"Don't I know ye, Maureen? Don't I know ye'd never have been content without the fun and the importance of the wake? So, when I heard ye were going, says I to meself: 'Let her have her fling. Maybe 'tis all she wants—just the new dresses and the bangles and the excitement.' Then I bought these mad clothes and waited."

"They'd do fine for Ameriky, Dennis dear," she said, stroking his arm. "Come to Ameriky with me, darlin', and I'll love ye true. Come where there's life and sthrates of light, and circuses every day."

"No," he answered rather sternly, "I'll not follow ye to Ameriky. 'Tis the woman must come to the man. And I've seen the people tiring of the fighting with the soil—I've seen them go, and I've seen some of them return. They come back to look for their souls, Maureen—for the souls they leave behind 'em. 'Tis the way the souls of the Irish don't emigrate. I have time to think, Mary, sitting on the hillside watching the cattle, but looking out to sea, always out to sea across the Atlantic. 'Tis only the bodies of the Irish which emigrate; the best part of them stays behind. And I've been tempted, Mary—I've been tempted to leave me soul and the land to fight it out together, and go where living comes easy and wages is high; but always the faces of those who have left the land for the States or the big towns comes up before me, Maureen, like the seagulls rising up from the cliff below, and I know there's something to pay, Maureen—something to pay that I'm afraid to pay. So I go back to the fight with the soil. There's something good comes out of the soil, out of the land and the cattle—something the big wages won't buy. It's rough and coarse, and it's not genteel; it's dark and cold in winter, when the land's asleep and the cattle don't thrive with all the turnips a man can slice for them—dark and cold while there's lights in the city streets. That's when I'm tempted, Maureen. But then the spring comes, and everything's growing, and the calves coming, and the yearlings turning to big bullocks, and watching the oats rise from below. It's a wonderful thing, and I have a hand in it. The work is hard, but it comes to life. It's not like the work in the factories—the bits of dead things a man makes by the thousand, never knowing what they're for—never knowing nor caring. So I'll stay by the farm me father left me, and you'll come there and live with me ever and always."

The man had been gazing out to sea as he spoke, feeling as though Nature itself was speaking through him; now he turned directly to the girl. Her face was hooded and hidden by her hands. He tried to pull them away,

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but could not stir them without using force. He looked at her for a moment; the sham jewellery on her arm glittered in the moonlight. Acting on a sudden impulse, he snapped the flimsy things in his strong

"Mary danced as she had never danced before."

fingers and flung them over the cliff. Still the girl did not stir, though she seemed to be listening for the tinkle on the rocks below; but the distance was too great.

"Is it angry with me ye are, Maureen?"

pleaded the young man, half fearful of what he had done.

The girl kept still, for souls are born in great silence—it is only the body that cries at birth—and Denny Flynn, on the cliffs above the Atlantic, was presiding at the birth of a soul in the moonlight, and he was afraid of the silent woman who had taken the place of the girl.

At last one hand stole to her neck—the other still covered her face—and the girl began to fumble with the clasps of the necklaces. One by one she unfastened them, and,

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when they were all in her hand, she threw them over the cliff. In the tense silence which followed, the man and the girl heard a tinkle on the rocks below like an altar-bell in a great cathedral.

Then Mary Hennessy took off her high-heeled shoes and sent them after the sham jewellery. "Ye'll be afther having to carry me home, Denny!" she cried, and threw her arms round his neck.

* * * * *

Out on the cliff the night was fading; only the greater planets could force their way through the pale blue radiance of the summer dawn. A little swaying, caressing breeze came dancing among the heather. There were mist wreaths on the ocean, and a bird twittered sleepily. For the first time since she had laid it there, Mary raised her dark head from Denny Flynn's chest.

In the cottage in Glory Lane, the uproar increased and became greater and greater, when old Mike Tobin, "who had a small dhrop taken," jumped up on a chair and, calling for silence, began to make a speech.

"Gintlemen and ladies all," began Mike, "I want to sphake a few words to ye before we goes, and to be thanking the Widder Hennessy—bad manners to ye rogues of blackguards for croosting me with tay-laves!—for the miracle evening herself and her childer is afther giving us."

"Good for you! 'Tis thrue for you! 'Twould be a bad night for us not to!" was heard on all sides.

"And, bhoys and gurls, I must say a word about poor Pat Hennessy. May Heaven have mercy on his soul! If he were——"

"Arrah, lave him alone!" cried several voices. "Is it a foine young woman like herself that will be looking out for another man next Shrove, and small blame to her, and lucky the man to get her?"

Mrs. Hennessy bridled up. "Indade, and I'd think very little of burying a couple more, and could be married any day I liked, and not wait for Shrove, neither, and maybe 'tis glad enough the men would be to get me, wid a tidy bit of land and the childer rared and all with me."

Mike, on whom these interruptions only seemed to act as a stimulant, and to give him time to collect his ideas, began the attack again with renewed vigour.

"And, bhoys, and gurls, young and old, begging your lave, I might say a few words for Mary Hennessy, the pride of the ball. May she have long life and a happy death, and may she have luck out in Ameriky, and meet with a good match, and that she may have money enough to burn, and may she come back to her mother to cheer up her ould age, the poor woman, and may she marry——"

He was about to go all over the same ground again, when, to everyone's astonishment, who should appear at the back of the crowd, hand in hand, but Denny Flynn and Mary Hennessy, her beaming face hardly less rapturous than his own.

"Faith, Mike Tobin," she began—and in the sudden hush occasioned by this unlooked-for turn of events, her voice rang out clear and distinct—"you were right. Feeding the pigs, as you says, at home, with comfort and aise besides your own fireside, is better, I'm afther thinking to-night, than slaving and tearing for someone else in America, and so I takes the advice I was bitter of ye for giving me when I was talking to ye over against the sea-wall, and I'll no go at all so!"—these last words being shouted triumphantly.

For some moments none could speak—they were all too thunderstruck—and only a general murmur was heard, but all eyes were turned, first on Mary and then on Denny, and backwards and forwards, again and again.

At last someone sufficiently recovered gasped out—

"Och, the Powers above save us! But what will ye do, and the passage-money gone, and all? Shure, 'tis too late to get it back!"

Then Mary gave a guilty start. "The passage! Well, I declare, what wid the outfit and the preparations for the wake, if I didn't clean forget to take the passage at all, at all!"

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THE GOLD-EYED PEACOCK.

By ANNE WITHERSPOON.

TOWARD Sheila's imploring gaze the ghostly white peacock on a great gold Kano screen turned nonchalantly the jewelled feathers of his wonderful tail, cocking with ancient malice his incurious gold eye over one shoulder.

The Oriental tapestries and embroideries, the temple brasses, the incense burner a thousand years old—all which had delighted her soul and imagination but a short time previously—now seemed to offer a cynical indifference to her desperate necessity. Buddha's subtly contemplative smile and Hotei's fat, jolly grin alike ignored the pressing facts of the situation. What was it to them? Too many generations had they seen come and go to be disturbed now by the perplexities of two girls in a fashionable London flat.

The urgent necessity fronting the occupants of one of the choicest suites in the Eglinton Mansions wore the implacable aspect of the golden sovereign, and the spectre that sat at their bedsides nightly was the galloping approach of the first of the month.

Sheila Caroll, in particular, with her vivid Celtic temperament, was poignantly conscious of the horrors of the abyss into which she was about to plunge, dragging in her fall her best friend, Betty Learoyd. For she it was who had accepted the loan of the apartment from her friend, Violet Eversley, who, married to a wealthy man, could not even surmise the shifts and economies of two girls struggling on the outer fringe of journalism.

"You know, dears," Violet had said, as they all stood together on the deck of a great P. and O. steamer, "the flat is yours till we come back at the end of March; so make yourselves at home, and we hope you'll be happy and comfortable."

Her husband echoed her wish. "Of course, you know," he added, as the gong sounded, "that it is obligatory to take your meals at the Eglinton Restaurant, but, aside from that, there are no rules or restrictions——"

"But they are very good meals, so you won't mind," interrupted Violet blithely.

Sheila's bliss, Betty's ecstatic joy at the notion of exchanging two bleak and dingy little bed-sitting-rooms in Bloomsbury for the luxurious flat near Hyde Park, was such that they could scarcely wait to say good-bye, so indecent was their haste to move in and taste the initial joys of ownership.

And it was all their lively fancy had painted it. How they had adored the fascinating treasures gathered by Violet and her husband from Far Eastern places! Each morning they rose to a fresh sense of proprietorship, and daily they feasted in the handsomely-appointed dining-room, where, at one of the choicest tables overlooking the Park, they were served to the most delicate and costly food that the London market affords.

If Betty was sometimes assailed with qualms as to whether their saving in room rent would quite equalise the luxuries necessitated by this move, one glance at her friend made it possible for her to stifle all misgivings. The colour was creeping back into Sheila's face, the light to her eyes; and Betty rejoiced that release from a fireless bedroom and cheap restaurant fare was, after all, the tonic of which the girl had been sorely in need. For Sheila's year and a half of desperate struggle for a livelihood, following hard upon her father's tragic death and the complete failure of the family fortunes, had brought her nearer to the brink of exhaustion than anyone but her staunch fellow-toiler knew.

As the months rolled by, and the hot summer in town passed, it left Sheila with a pallor that made her big, dark Irish eyes seem larger and more melancholy than even the cruel blow of home troubles and the sordid environment of London lodgings appeared altogether to account for. Betty had shrewdly wondered if it were not some inner hidden grief, to a knowledge of which she was denied, that sculptured hollows and pencilled shadows in the delicate face. But

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her anxieties vanished as she watched her friend responding to the subtle influences of warmth and luxury and beauty. If deep in the long, bright eyes the shadow Betty wondered over still slept, Sheila in Eglinton Mansions was a better mistress of its moods than Sheila of the old third-floor hall bedroom. With a sigh of satisfaction, she had accepted the happy turn of Fate's wheel.

"Don't let's borrow trouble, and do, please, let us enjoy the goods the gods provide while they are in a generous humour," she gaily implored Betty, when the latter appeared to have compunctions over the wisdom of their venture.

Joyfully Sheila brought forth long-ignored cards of introduction, and sped them on their way to women of great social circumstance. At Eglinton Mansions it was so easy to dispense the hospitalities of Violet's perfectly-appointed tea-table. And London of the rich, fashionable set is pleased to be entertained by two pretty young women who have a gift for playing the hostess, and whose lives are, to all outward seeming, as care-free and as gilded as their own.

It was enough that Sheila and Betty were friends of the smart and wealthy Lady Eversley, that Sheila's letters were correct and certified documents. Beyond this point no explanations were asked or offered; and after the little teas, cards and notes flowed in on the tide of the morning post, bidding Betty Learoyd and Sheila Caroll to the best that gay London can afford.

To Betty it was a new and delightful sensation; to Sheila it was deliciously natural to be once more arranging tea-parties, dining out, chattering happily at crowded receptions, and sitting in boxes at the theatre. Besides, the whirl and stimulation of it made one forget what had seemed almost unforgettable, and stilled a dull pain that in time threatened to become a chronic suffering of soul.

Occasionally a vague premonition that sooner or later the piper must be paid flitted through the minds of both the reckless, happy girls; but even Betty had learned now to push the troublesome thought out by something apparently more pressing and infinitely more pleasant.

"Bills are never presented here till the end of the month, and then one is always given fifteen days of grace in which to consider ways and means before sending in one's cheque," soothed Sheila blandly, when the question of finance arose one snowy afternoon, as they tea'd, for a wonder, alone.

It was the weekly pay envelope from *Home Helps*, for space work dashed down feverishly between social engagements, that had brought Betty round to a discussion of ways and means, and she wore a startled look as she contemplated the disconcertingly small sum represented by the paper slip.

The fifteenth of the month was all very well, and the game was perhaps worth the candle, and to cross bridges before they presented themselves was a foolish proceeding; but Betty's heart, for some reason, began to quake within her, and she musingly replaced the cheque in the envelope and turned to watch Sheila practising her Japanese dances in the dusk.

Her friend's dark, poetic beauty, set off by a gorgeous white-embroidered kimono of Violet's, distracted Betty's mind for the moment from disturbing premonitions, as her eyes followed the slim figure swaying and bowing before the luminous, ghostly, palely-shimmering Bird of Heaven, limned by the vanished hand of the Kano master on the great gold screen.

As was Sheila's half-mocking, half-serious habit, she danced to the peacock, since he touched some vein of dreamy Celtic mysticism in the girl's nature.

"That round, bright, hard eye of his," she declared to Betty, with a whimsical smile, "makes me remember back hundreds and hundreds of years ago, when he was a pagan god, and I was a poor slave and captive. I danced to him then in order to win my life and freedom, and he, being a powerful god and pleased with my performance, granted both. Therefore, for memory's sake, I dance to him now."

This vagrant fancy, born of an idle hour and a fanciful day-dream, allied to her passionate love of dressing up and dancing in the half light of the winter afternoons, had led Sheila into strange paths of study, and into very expert management of the many beautiful Japanese costumes Violet had thrust carelessly away in drawers and cupboards. Often, when she should have been at work, she pored fascinated over precious, time-mellowed Japanese prints and books, and, dressed sometimes as a Shinto priestess, sometimes as a flower-robed geisha, she rendered homage in the strange saltatory lore of the East to the gold-eyed one, who looked on inscrutably from his perch in the shadowy maple branches.

As Betty followed her movements now, so quaintly and fantastically charming, her cogitation upon pounds, shillings, and pence once more retreated into the background.

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It was the dragon dance in which Sheila was bending and posturing, through a wonderful new series of steps and gestures, when a loud knock on the door sent her flying back to her corner among the pillows of the divan. From that dignified haven she accepted an envelope presented to her, on his silver tray, by the boy in buttons.

"Anything interesting?" inquired Betty casually from her scratch pad, to which she had returned, and on which she had once more fallen to figuring.

For a moment or two Sheila failed to answer. From the envelope she had taken a single sheet of paper, and upon it she stared with the eyes of one suddenly awakened from an agreeable dream to bitter reality.

Mutely she rose, laid the sheet before Betty, and wandered away to the window.

"There must be some mistake," she ventured at last, turning a stricken countenance from the snowy, darkling world without.

"No, there's no mistake," said Betty, with a little gasp, as of one coming up from the shock of a cold plunge. "It's we who have made a mistake—the mistake of our lives in coming here."

Her eye ran rapidly over the sheet of formidable items contained in their first bill—

"Three pounds ten apiece a week for meals—that's twenty-eight pounds all by itself. Extras: Flowers, ices, special service, etc., twelve pounds; laundry, three pounds twelve-and-six; telephone service, eighteen shillings. No, it's quite right, Sheila. We've got to retrieve ourselves somehow, and get out of here just as quick as we can."

"How can we get out if we can't pay our bills?" asked Sheila, to whom the prospect of returning to Bloomsbury was not alluring.

"We *must* pay," said Betty with decision. "How much money have you?"

A frenzied but minute investigation of their bank books revealed the fact that they had somewhat less than ten pounds between them. They stared at each other—at first paralysed, then incredulous, then hysterical.

"If only I hadn't spent three pounds last week on a hat for Mrs. Sallet-Burnett's reception!" wailed Sheila in anguished tones. "But I *had* to have it."

"And my story came back to-day from *The Green Magazine*," murmured Betty. "I was sure they would take it."

After the mockery of their costly dinner was over, an hour later, the situation looked even blacker than before. Indeed, it stood forth in all the cold nakedness of horror. Sheila had lost all disinclination to giving up the flat. To give it up with decency was now her one fervent desire. Before the menace of disgrace she felt dizzy and helpless.

"Well, they can't turn us out before the end of the month," said Betty, with her practical Yorkshire good sense, "and by the end of the month we've *got* to find a way."

A feverish week slipped by. Betty worked early and late, and Sheila shut herself up in the drawing-room, where she tried vainly to write a story that the editors would pour gold into her lap for. But apparently her inspirations were paralysed.

"If I were as wise as *you*," she said, apostrophising the white peacock, "I know I could find a way to help two foolish girls out of a scrape—yes, even if I had to give them the jewels out of my feathers." But that esoteric bird, with a sardonic gleam of his gold eye, gazed back at his devotee still impassive, incommunicative, and wholly secretive.

At the end of the week they counted up once more their resources.

"I've taken in four pounds," said Betty hopefully.

"And I haven't taken in one penny," announced Sheila. There were heavy shadows under her lovely eyes. "I've sent out two stories, but I know nobody will buy them; and I've spent eight shillings on 'bus fares, trying to get fixed employment. Betty, what *shall* we do?"

The usually merry hazel eyes lifted to the beseeching dark ones held a harassed gleam. "It's too ridiculous," suddenly burst forth their owner vindictively, "that we should be in such a scrape! But it's all our own fault. We were so crazy to come that we couldn't think of anything else. Now I am positively beginning to loathe all these beautiful things. And as for that old peacock"—glaring belligerently at the gold screen—"I believe it is the cause of all our bad luck."

"That is sheer nonsensical superstition!" retorted Sheila. "It is not his fault. How could it be? Yesterday he fixed me with his glittering gaze, and positively, Betty, he looked as if he was trying to tell me something."

Sheila sprang impetuously from her seat.

"Now watch his eye!" she cried, dexterously manipulating her white draperies.

Against the background of the gold screen her reed-like slimness showed as supple as

that of any Japanese dancer; and Betty, contriving a pair of opera glasses out of her hands, peered intently at the pretty pantomime.

"Who is being superstitious now?" she queried with light scorn. "But, Sheila, Sheila, stay so—just as you are!" Her voice changed suddenly to an exultant note as she rose to her feet. "I have it—I really have it! And, after all, you are right—your peacock did have something to tell you. But don't speak to me. Don't ask me one question until I have developed my idea on paper!"

Betty fled to the writing-desk as she spoke, and Sheila, relaxing her pose, came slowly back to her corner of the big divan. If she had supplied a suggestion for the columns of *Home Helps*, she was glad; but, after all, one column more or less would not take them very far out of their difficulties.

Sheila felt weary in every limb, and dispirited in hope and courage, as she sat in the deepening dusk. The day had been so hard, so futile, and the black cloud of old anxieties, shaken off a month ago, seemed thickening round her once more. What would they think at home if they knew? The girl shivered.

At home, in the corner of Ireland that she knew and loved, the whole neighbourhood of dear, gay, hard-riding men and women were at this season following the hounds over hill and dale in the sharp, sweet morning air. She could close her eyes and see the familiar scene of the meet at Morey Hall; the music of laughter and the thrilling cries of the hounds came back to her on the elfin echoes of memory. Two long, hard, cruel years ago, and on her brave-hearted, fleet-footed mare she had been the merriest and maddest of all that happy crew. No smallest cloud shadowed her existence then. She was young, and knew herself to be fair; she rode as only an Irish girl bred to the saddle can ride, and life seemed to be on the brink of a wonderful fulfilment. How little she had dreamed of the terrible changes so soon to follow! Where was *he* now? she wondered, with the old dull ache at her heart. And why had he never sent her a word or a line through all these bitter experiences? He might have been kinder, and forgiven the foolish girlish whim that had led her to test her own power. She had not dreamed he could be so easily, so passionately jealous. How his hot words had stung and bruised! And how her pride had revolted at his bitter assertion that she was a flirt—that she did not care!

Not care—not care! It was the undeserved cruelty of that taunt that had led her to fling furiously back the old racial cry of Celt and Saxon, not dreaming that he would take her at her word, and leave her for ever in anger and unforgiveness.

Two slow, painful tears welled up under Sheila's eyelids and ran down her white cheeks, to be brushed hastily away.

"Sheila!" called Betty, lifting her auburn head from the desk pad on which she had been busily engaged.

"Sheila!"—in louder tones.

"Sheila"—peremptorily—"you *must* listen to this!" Betty gave an important little cough by way of preliminary, and read—

"'You are cordially invited to attend a benefit performance to be given by the famous Japanese No dancer, O Kumagai, on Wednesday, the 27th, from three to five, at No. 81, Eglinton Mansions, Hyde Park. Admission half a guinea.'"

"Don't you think that will bring them?"—eagerly.

"Bring them? Bring whom? What *are* you talking about, Betty?"

"I've decided," returned Betty demurely, "to give a reception—a big reception—to enable people—all our friends, and anyone else who will come—to see a performance by the celebrated No dancer, O Kumagai, for which unique privilege they are going to pay me half a guinea each."

"And who is the Japanese dancer, O Kumagai? I've never heard of her," queried Sheila, with interest.

"She's *you! You* are O Kumagai! Nature has endowed you for the part, Sheila, with that willow-wand figure of yours, and your languishing dark orbs. I wish it had been me"—regretfully—"but whoever heard of a red-headed, green-eyed Oriental dancer?"

"You know really, Betty, the situation is too serious to be made a joke of," reproached Sheila.

"*Joke!* Now, Sheila, I've been visited by a truly marvellous inspiration. It's *the* solution to our problem, if you'll only fall in and do your part." And Betty proceeded to unfold her scheme.

She had concisely outlined on paper the chief features, which included notes to every smart and rich friend on their calling list, briefly explaining the occasion of the reception, and their propaganda on behalf of a wonderful Japanese Pavlova, whose high lineage forbade revelation, but who would appear masked

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on the afternoon in question, to give the sacred No dances of the East to an audience of their friends.

"I'll have nothing to do with it—positively nothing!" cried Sheila, horrified when the dizzy fabric of Betty's brain lay unrolled before her. "You must be crazy! Why, we couldn't fool people like that! What do you take them for—idiots? And what if the papers should get hold of it?" she demanded severely.

"The papers *will* get hold of it," replied Betty, unabashed. "I shall subsidise Jimmy Carter beforehand. He'll do anything I say. We'll take him into the secret."

"But it's not honest," objected Sheila, beginning to weaken.

"Honest! Pooh!" asserted Betty boldly. "If we give these women their money's worth of entertainment, I can't see where the dishonesty comes in. Every artist has a right to a *nom de guerre*. Why, my dear girl, I don't doubt they'll be trying to get you to dance at their entertainments. There may be a fortune in it." And the irrepressible Betty went off into a gale of laughter.

"But how do you expect me to dance *real* Japanese dances?"—indignantly. "I never even *saw* one!"

"Nonsense!"—airily. "You have all the paraphernalia here. And remember that probably not one of these women ever saw a No dance. You'll be masked, you know, and all the postures and costumes are given in that stunning book with the coloured plates that you already know by heart. If we *only* could have some Japanese music!"

"We might hire that little Japanese woman from Kikuzawa's art shop," suggested Sheila hesitatingly. "She plays on an instrument something like a harp, which she calls a *koto*."

"Oh, Sheila," cried Betty rapturously, "that removes the last possible obstacle! She can do your hair, and tie your *obi*, and hand round the refreshments; and she can't speak a word of English, so no one can find out anything from her. All you have to do is to wear your mask and dance your part, and *I* will do the rest."

Betty was as good as her word. And as patronesses of their high-born Japanese *protégée*, the girls found themselves successful beyond their wildest dreams of avarice. Modish London in February lends itself joyfully to any new and promising form of amusement, and what with the enthusiastic efforts of kindly, bored, feather-headed, fashionable Mrs. Sallett-Burnett, the acceptances that poured in threatened to test the full capacity of their ample drawing-rooms.

Sheila, after her first misgivings, found herself entering fully into the spirit of her part. What woman born of woman would not have welcomed the chance of displaying herself in those marvellous garments? There were chests of beautiful things heavy with gold and embroidery, jewelled hair ornaments, and painted fans. The girls blessed Violet's improvident buying and unerring taste.

Jimmy Carter, after a few feeble and purely masculine protests on the score of morality, meekly gave in, and his enthusiasm gradually awakened as Sheila, whose dramatic and artistic instincts were now thoroughly roused, proved herself to be, if not a genuine Oriental, at least a very convincing impersonation.

It was a mad, even a desperate, venture; but she had lost all fear of it when the eventful afternoon arrived, and the six-panelled gold screen was arranged on a slightly raised dais at the extreme end of the inner reception-room. Under the ægis of the mystical Bird of Heaven, she meant to dance once more for her freedom—for her escape from the close coils of cruel circumstance. An odd thrill of excitement ran through her when the blinds were drawn and the lights switched on the scene of her great experiment. They glowed softly through a shading branchwork of maple leaves, for in white, pale red, and gold, all the decorations of her stage had been carried out to match the colouring of the superb screen.

It was Betty, gowned *de rigueur* in frock, hat, and gloves to harmonise with the setting of the scene, who, in her high, sweet voice, greeted the guests and made explicit explanations of her friend's absence. As stage-manager and moral support for the Japanese dancer, Sheila must, Miss Learoyd in fluent fibs announced, remain behind the scenes. And the murmur of admiration evoked by the beauty of the stage effects grew stronger, till the door was closed, and an expectant hush settled upon the closely-seated audience at the first sound of the invisible *koto*.

One by one notes soft as falling rain were dropped into the silence, and then——

Then from behind the screen stepped slowly, deliberately, a figure—a vision of strange and startling beauty—a slim form in shadowy white, from between the long drooping sleeves of which the body appeared

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to be of no more than the thickness of a dragon-fly. The hem of the filmy garment, which lay on the floor and spread out fanwise from the small white-clad feet, was thickly bordered with butterflies, vivid as though springing from a silver mist. The great stiff gold *obi* that encircled the slender body spread its folds, encrusted with embroidery, across her shoulders like the pinions of a brilliant moth. On the girl's head, surmounting wing-like coils of dark hair, rose a quaint crown-shaped head-dress, set thick with small, quivering jewelled butterflies. In one hand was held a fan of gold.

It was the dance of butterflies, from the ancient No drama of that name.

For a moment the dancer stood motionless, and then, to music of a weird and syncopated beat, the figure began to move in slow, strange, archaic measures. The smooth, expressionless lines of the white-lacquered No mask lent an almost death-like emphasis to the strangely stiff, yet indescribably harmonious, motions of the dancer, whose sliding feet, clad in white cotton *tabi*, were never once lifted from the floor. The only sounds were those that came from the harp-like notes of the *koto* and the metallic click of the fan, as occasionally it opened and shut in rhythm with the music. It was a performance as phantasmagorial and ghostly as a vision of butterflies on a moonlight night. And as the dancer moved, swayed, and caused her long sleeves to undulate with a motion as of grasses in the wind, it seemed as if thousands of butterflies came to life and fluttered in a twinkling, moving cloud of wings about some young priestess performing her mystical, self-appointed rites before an invisible pagan deity.

The spell of a new enchantment held the audience breathless through a performance utterly unlike any dancing they had ever seen, until the vanishing of the white-clad figure brought forth rounds of enthusiastic applause.

To Betty the enterprise seemed crowned with the utmost success. Even smiling little Toyo San, serving Japanese tea and *O kwashi* and a delectable beverage called wine of Tosa, helped to charm the guests; while the gracious young hostess found herself overwhelmed by demands from the well-dressed enthusiasts clamouring for the name, address, and price per performance of this Japanese marvel.

"But really—really, I am so sorry," announced Betty to a dowager in steel grey and sables of the utmost magnificence, "but I am under a bond of secrecy. I may tell you this much, however"—with a wicked gleam in her mischievous eyes—"she is no *ordinary* Japanese. These No dances are confined to the nobility, and are handed down, almost like a religious rite, from generation to generation, only in certain privileged families. It must on no account be known *who* O Kumagai really is."

With a mysterious smile and shake of her head, Betty moved off, leaving her inquirer piqued and impressed; but she was not permitted to progress far in her search for the missing Jimmy Carter, who was nowhere to be seen. Dearly would she have liked the chance of pinning him down with angry reproaches somewhere on the telephone, but she was too greatly in demand. Her guests were filled with a flattering curiosity. Engagements were to be had for the picking up, and one charmed spectator, sipping with a *blasé* air of enjoyment a tiny glass of the gold-coloured wine of Tosa, insisted that so unique, so charming an affair should be described in the newspapers.

"A representative of *The Messenger* was to have come," replied Betty, mentally registering a vow to get even with the faithless Jimmy, "but I don't see him."

"I saw a young man over there in the alcove," suggested the lady. "He looked as if he might be a journalist—at any rate, he was writing."

Betty departed with smiling excuses. "I think I will just see and make sure," she murmured, moving in the direction indicated.

The sight that met her eyes froze her complacency with a sudden slight chill of misgiving. A young man undoubtedly was in the alcove, and was engaged in the act of writing, but just as undoubtedly he was *not* Jimmy Carter.

The broad-shouldered, well-set-up figure, the determined chin, and the excessively well-fitting clothes belonged to none of her friends of the journalistic world.

Moving with gentle deliberation, Miss Learoyd encountered a glance from a pair of keen grey eyes, suddenly upraised to hers, with a friendly smile.

"I am so glad to see a representative of the Press here," said she shyly. "It is a charming entertainment, is it not?"

"Quite too charming," assented the young man, rising quickly—"and quite too clever," he added.

"Clever?" questioned Betty, with delicately considering brows. "Yes, these Japanese women *are* amazingly clever."

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"Was it some Diana of the Far East—this mystical moon-maiden?"

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"Say, rather, these *English* women," amended the young man, with an unmistakable emphasis of tone.

Betty looked at him with a sudden startled glance of inquiry.

He bent nearer to her and lowered his voice.

"Can you keep a secret?"

For answer, Betty nodded, blessing her hat and gloves that disguised her *rôle* of hostess.

"Strictly in confidence, then," he returned, "I'm a reporter for the occasion only. A friend of mine on *The Mercury* asked me to come in his place, as he knows nothing about Japanese dances, and I do, a bit."

"Oh, do you?"

"I came here," continued the young man, "expecting to see a *bona fide* Japanese performance; and what was my surprise to discover that—well, not to put too fine a point upon it, you all are being treated to one of the cleverest frauds I've ever seen exploited upon a London public."

Betty's eyes dilated, but she sternly marshalled her wits.

"Frauds?" she repeated in a gently puzzled voice. "You mean——"

"Why, you don't suppose for an instant that that's a *real* Japanese dancer we've just seen, do you?"

"Why—why not?"

He smiled. "Well, it happens that I have only just returned from Japan, where I have spent the last year and a half. While there, it interested me to make something of a study of the drama, both modern and ancient. They are utterly unlike, you know. Among other things, I have seen several times this very classic and beautiful dance of the butterflies. This is a remarkable impersonation for one who, I venture to say, has never seen the original, but—there are some absurd mistakes."

"Do tell me about them," besought Betty, dazzling this all-too-knowing young man with her most captivating smile.

"Well, O Kumagai, for instance. That is the name of a well-known Japanese warrior, and is grotesquely ill-suited to represent a female dancer."

"Do go on. What next?"

"Next," continued the young man, "her costume is two hundred years later than the one used in the dance proper, and is not a No dancer's costume at all. It is an extremely beautiful court dancer's dress, with the ancient *obi* and head-dress of the No period."

"Oh, how clever you are!" murmured the half-hypnotised Betty. "Now, to me it seemed so real, so genuine; I don't believe that anyone else, either, has suspected."

"Perhaps not. But they will the more surprised to-morrow morning, when——"

He was stopped by the [illegible] touch of a frightened little hand on his sleeve.

"Why, you don't mean—you wouldn't——" Betty was looking at him with wide, horror-stricken eyes.

His pleasant mouth tightened with a look of slight grimness.

"I am afraid I do mean, and I would," he returned quietly.

Into his steady grey eyes Betty stared with the helplessness of a bird being charmed by a snake.

"But don't you think," she faltered, "that maybe it's rather a cruel thing that you are proposing to do—that, for all you know, it may be only an innocent prank?"

"There's no innocent prank about this," he said gently, smiling at her *naïveté*. "These people are obviously thoroughgoing swindlers. They have mulcted the audience this afternoon of seventy or eighty pounds. I feel it my duty, since I am here to unearth their fraud and to force these charlatans to return the money they have taken in. If I didn't, I should be tacitly siding in swindling you and the rest of your fellow-guests."

Although the rooms were as warm as summer, Betty could not repress a little shiver of pure fright.

"You don't seem to take into consideration," she urged, trying to keep the tremble out of her voice, "that these may be private rooms. You jump at conclusions when you say the whole thing is a fraud. The hostess, too, is no doubt being imposed upon, and it would surely be very painful for her, and most inconsiderate, don't you think, to draw public attention upon her in this manner?"

"Perhaps"—he paused, and Betty's faint heart had an instant of hope—"but for this."

He held up to the light the tiny goblet of gold-coloured liquid.

"Do you see this delicious cordial being handed round as wine of Tosa? There's no such thing, to my belief! Well, this is simply nothing more nor less than a drink known to all the children of Ireland as *cowslip tea!*"

He looked at her triumphantly.

"Ah," faltered poor Betty, feeling as if the solid earth were giving way beneath her, "so you know Ireland also?"

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"Now, rather! I hunted there two seasons He paused abruptly, and his eyes hard with some not altogether happy on; but before he could continue his falling revelation, Betty had murmured an excuse, and had fled in desperation to give Sheila some warning.

But the dragon dance was just beginning. Palpitating between hope and despair, Betty had to wait until it was over. Then, under the cover of the prolonged and delighted applause, she made her way to Sheila's dressing-room, wearing the face of tragedy.

"What has happened?" cried Sheila in alarm.

"Oh, my dear, the *worst!*" wailed poor Betty. "I've just had a telegram from Jimmy. He's been called out on a murder case, and can't come. And there's an *awful* young man here from *The Mercury*. He's seen through the whole thing, and he says he's going to write it up for the papers, and expose us as swindlers! And, oh, Sheila, we're *lost* if you can't do something to stop him. I've tried everything, and I can make no more impression on him than on a block of stone!" finished Betty despairingly.

Turning as white as the mask she had just removed, Sheila sat down. "This *is* serious, Betty," she said faintly. "Could you find out who he is? I suppose he's a gentleman?"—doubtfully.

"He's a traveller just returned from Japan. I wish he'd been swallowed up in an earthquake!"—viciously. "I almost forgot—he gave me his card. Here it is."

"Oh!" gasped Sheila, reading the name. "Oh!" she repeated helplessly, looking at Betty, her eyes dilating with sudden shock. "Why—why, he's a man I used to know! Is he tall, Betty, with grey eyes?"

"Regular searchlights!"—feverishly. "Is he amenable, Sheila? Can you do anything with him?"

"I don't know," said Sheila slowly. "I could once, but—but the truth is, Betty, we parted on—on very bad terms. I don't believe he would even speak to me now."

"I suppose that means you quarrelled, or something," cried Betty impatiently. "But no matter, Sheila—you *must* make the attempt. This is no time for pride. You've got to make it up to him—go down on your knees, if necessary, but *don't* let him leave this place to bring disgrace upon us!"

A sudden red flamed in Sheila's cheek.

"Don't worry, Betty," she said, rising and patting her on the shoulder. "We are not beaten yet. Go back to our guests now, and don't let Mr. Candler escape."

But, left alone, she sank down in a chair. She had no plan of campaign, no time to think one out. She must dance—dance as she had never danced before—and then trust to Fate and her own inspiration. Perhaps the white Bird of Heaven would tell her what to do. She sprang up and shook her head impatiently. It was time to get ready for her final appearance.

Betty meanwhile, with the guile of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove, had merely forwarded, by the hand of Toyo San, a few words pencilled on a card to the terrible young man in the alcove. He was to wait for her just there until the others had gone. She had something of the utmost importance to communicate, and she would introduce him to the Japanese dancer.

A nod of his head, easily seen across the room, carried to Betty his assent; and then he fell to wondering how the oddly pretty girl had managed the matter. But his wonderings were stopped by the last dance of O Kumagai.

Was it some Diana of the Far East—this mystical moon-maiden with the crescent in her flowing hair, and the cloudy, misty garments, through which gleamed silver moons cunningly wrought? Or had she just descended from Mount Horai, where the moon-goddess of Eastern mythology has her abode, to enravish the earth with a glimpse of her fairness?

The dancer seemed touched with some new compelling grace, some inner spark of magnetic fire, that swayed the young body, dreamlike in its loveliness, to something of the very witchery of moonlight. The lights had been lowered to a glow approaching the softness of moonbeams. And as the dancer wove her dreamy, gliding paces, rippling her long sleeves until they streamed forth like pennants of cloud driven by the wind, swept along by harp-like sighings of minor tone, suddenly the whole scene underwent a strange transformation to the watcher in the alcove, and for a dizzy moment he was again in the conservatory at Morey Hall, under a flowering exotic tree laden with white bloom, holding in his arms a slim form as fragrant and white as the blossoms above them. For one ecstatic moment he tasted a joy almost of anguish in its intensity, and then the scene dissolved, and once more he was looking at the Japanese dancer weaving her spell of witchery.

As he gazed, caught by the spell of her

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irresistible grace, suddenly the girl drooped, sank, and by some swift, untranslatable, and swirling motion of her body became silhouetted against the dim gold background of the screen into the embodiment of crouching appeal. Poised above, among the shadowy foliage, gleamed the ghostly peacock. Willoughby Candler caught a ray from its gold eye, which, by some trick of the light, glared fiercely threatening, as that of some menacing deity, daring him to touch or hurt her—the darling of the Bird of Heaven. From a beautiful and fantastic dance the scene had suddenly become transposed into the terms of a mystical symbolism.

"By Jove, she's an exquisite creature, whoever she is!" murmured the young man under his breath.

The applause broke forth deafeningly on all sides.

"The best of them would have to look to their laurels if this girl should go on the stage," remarked his neighbour in tones of conviction.

Mr. Candler, stern moralist as he was, could not help seeing that the guests had received a satisfying afternoon of pleasure. Expressions of appreciation rose on all sides, and drifted in from the vestibule, where the rustling, silken-clad women were taking their departure. They echoed down the broad staircase and rose on a high key from the well-packed lift. The afternoon had been a rare experience in the lives of many, apparently, and curious compunctions began to trouble the meditations of the young man in the alcove.

After all, if he had not committed himself to that very nice girl, why should he make it his business to stir up a fuss? Mr. Willoughby Candler felt his stern resolutions beginning to crumble as he entered the now wide and empty drawing-room.

But *who* was this approaching soundlessly over the thick, soft rugs? The young man stared as if he beheld an apparition from the spirit world.

In the misty robes of the moon-maiden, unmasked, pale, and smiling, with the crescent in her dark hair and the stars in her diadem, still holding her wonderful fan, she advanced slowly toward him.

He drew in his breath sharply.

"Won't you speak to me, Mr. Candler?" said the vision softly, stopping before him and holding out a slim and lovely white hand.

"Why," he stammered, "am I dreaming, or is it really *you?* And are *you* masquerading, too? What does it all mean? I begin to think this place is bewitched."

Sheila demurely withdrew her hand.

"Do sit down," she said calmly, though her face went whiter than her robes. "I have something to say to you. Betty tells me that you cleverly saw through my poor little fraud at once."

The young man drew back as if he had been struck in the face.

"So," he said slowly, "you are both in the plot, and *you* are the Japanese dancer? May I ask," he continued, with darkened eyes bent upon the lovely face upturned to his with a look of strange appeal, "how it is that I find you in such—ah, very peculiar circumstances?"

"I hardly see your right to demand explanations," murmured the moon-goddess, dropping her white lids and flushing deeply under the accusing fire of his eyes, "but I am here to make them, since I learn that you otherwise mean to expose us."

He clenched his hands and looked down upon this new and humbled Sheila.

"I don't demand—I ask—I entreat," he said huskily. "But what am I to think? I find you in these extraordinary surroundings"—he gave a comprehensive glance about the rich Oriental rooms—"impersonating a Japanese dancer for the amusement of a lot of silly women. Is it a joke, or——"

"No, it is not a joke," interrupted Sheila quietly, but with a spot of bright colour burning in each cheek. "Can your imagination suggest no other and more obvious reason? I did it for the money." Her lids fluttered and fell before the incredulity in his.

"There is not much of a joke," she continued almost in a whisper, "to be found in that fact. There was even less of a joke to be found in the alternative that confronted us—being turned out of this flat for lack of money to pay our bills."

He made no reply.

"And now," she hurried on desperately, "I've come to ask you not to expose us—not to——"

"Sheila, for Heaven's sake, what do you mean?" he broke into her speech roughly. "What has happened? After all that has passed between us, I have a right to know the truth. Can't you see that you are torturing me with my own ignorance? I've been in Japan for a year and a half. I wanted to forget. Six months ago I came back to find you if I could. But they returned the appeal I sent you from the Post Office. And now,

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by the merest chance, I discover *you* here, in London, like this."

The Sheila who suddenly rose and stood before him, flushing and paling, yet telling her story with an unconscious pathos of courageous dignity and no smallest attempt at dramatic effect, was not the wilful, passionate Irish girl he had known, whose beauty had taken him by storm, and from whom he had parted in heart-burning and anger. Nor was it the moon-goddess of the dance. In their place stood a girl pallid, tired, brave, touched with a new grace of womanliness, saddened by contact with grief, but preserving her pride through all her hard experiences.

"And so, you see," she finished quietly, "disgrace was certain the other way, and we took a desperate chance."

"It was a frightful risk," he muttered, repressing an overwhelming desire to take the narrator in his arms and shelter her for evermore from contact with the hard world. His notes were in his hand, and, as he spoke, he tore them across the middle and flung them into a great brass *hibachi* which stood near.

"Suppose," he asked with a severity born of the inner tempest of emotion that shook him—"suppose you had been found out by a stranger, and——"

"But we weren't," the girl smiled up at him. "We had the Japanese gods and the Bird of Heaven on our side. And now poor Betty and I can pay our bills properly at the end of the month, unless——"

She stopped suddenly and drew back, while hot tears rose, with a blush of shame dying her cheeks.

"Unless?" he asked.

She turned upon him two eyes starry with unshed tears.

"I know," she faltered—"I know how it must seem to you. I can see it all from your point of view now—I realise how wrong it was—how—how dishonest. And—and if you think we should do so, I won't keep this money. I thought I was earning it honestly enough, but I see now I wasn't. I will return it——"

"But you were—you did!" he cried incoherently. "You gave those people an hour of enchantment. They went from here feeling more than repaid. You painted for them pictures and impressions they will never forget—that they never could have had but for you."

But Sheila would not listen.

"You are only trying to console me for what is done and irremediable," she said. "But it isn't so impossible as you think. I am sure the landlord is kind. If I explain everything to him, he will perhaps let us pay him back what we owe by degrees"—she gave him a melancholy smile—"and then I will at least be doing what is right." Her glance of wistful appeal was more than he could stand.

"My poor, brave darling!" he cried, catching her hands in his and drawing her to him. "Believe me, dearest, as a man of honour, I would not let you keep that money if you had not rightfully earned it. It is yours absolutely, to do what you please with. But"—masterfully taking her in his arms—"you must give *me* the right, Sheila, to pay your bills for the rest of my life."

For a long moment the moon-goddess was eclipsed as by the passing of a cloud.

"Someone is watching us," whispered she presently, lifting her head from its resting-place on his shoulder.

His glance followed her own, to rest on the great, brooding Bird of Heaven, now a dim spot of whiteness in the gathering shadows of the long drawing-room. By some quick intuition Betty had switched off the lights and left the lovers to the dusk.

"A hundred and twice a hundred years ago he was a mystic pagan deity, and granted a dancer's wish," whispered the girl, smiling, to her lover, "and again to-day his power has been exerted in my behalf. See how kindly his elfish eye looks upon us! In a moment its light will fail, and his power will go with it, but he brought you to me, my dear."

She turned to the man beside her, who, laughing half mockingly at her fancy, and wholly exultantly in his joy, caught her to his heart, while in the depth of the twilight's shadow the gleam of the gold eye upon them was gradually blotted out.

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CHARCOAL CUT CHARCOAL.

By T. D. MAXWELL.

R. AKA ELE yawned loudly and expansively. He was very bored with life. The first thirty years of it he had spent at Anani, his birthplace and the metropolis of the West African Cotton Coast Colony. There, petty trading and petty larceny, successful speculation and equally successful peculation, had so lined his pockets that in his own not very particular set he was a social light of tolerably high candle-power. One uses the phrase "lined his pockets" metaphorically only, for he seldom wore any, and, as a general rule, wisely clung to the more wholesome native dress of his youth—a coloured cloth tied round his waist, and a thing that was neither shirt nor singlet, but a mixture of the two. But all of a sudden the noiseless tenor of his way had been disturbed. A message had reached him that his elder and only brother was dying near Otoka, some eighty miles up country, so he packed a few boxes—chiefly with shoddy imported merchandise which no longer appealed to the astute Anani native, but which might possibly deceive the more unsophisticated inhabitants of the Otoka neighbourhood—and started on his pious pilgrimage.

It was a complete success. The sick man died rapidly and cheaply, and Aka Ele found himself sole heir to some exceedingly prosperous farms and several acres of cotton land in full cultivation. True, his brother's three widows at one time threatened to make a palaver unless they received some share of their late husband's property. But he disposed of them with Machiavellian cunning. To each one separately he pretended acquiescence touched with brother-in-lawful sympathy, and to each he promised all her demands, giving her simultaneously to understand that, unless he could prove something against the other two, they would all have to share equally in the subject-matter of those demands. From each thereupon he received whispered confidences about the other two, and when he had wormed all he wanted to know out of the three ladies, he drove them away dowerless, snapping and spitting like so many vicious cats.

But now he had been at Otoka for some weeks, and was beginning to weary of rustic simplicity. Anani, indeed, can hardly be described as deliriously exciting. Still, it does contain a house superscribed: "Good Chop. Licensed Premise," where he and his friends could air their English, talk scandal tempered with a little gentle sedition, and call each other "Mister" loudly and publicly, and that is a temptation which no West African can possibly resist.

But at Otoka he had to speak his own native language. "How are you, dear boy?" was the extent of the English of the only other man there who knew any at all, and he didn't know what it meant. His brother's reserve and success had earned him much unpopularity, which Aka Ele soon found to be part of his inheritance.

So that is why he was so bored with life, and that is why he gave vent to a loud and expansive yawn. He abbreviated it, however, to shout "Hullo!" to someone who bawled his name, and who, it turned out, had brought an invitation from an Anani acquaintance who was spending a few days at a village some three miles up the river. Delighted at the opportunity, Aka Ele promptly called his boy, ordered him to make ready a small somewhat time-expired canoe, the property of his late brother, rolled up a mat or two, a yam or two, and a bottle or two, locked up the house, and started off to pay his call. The stream was swift and strong, the river winding, and they made but slow progress up it. The wretched boy pulled, puffed, and perspired, while Aka Ele lolled back on his mats and volubly urged him on to greater efforts. They were negotiating a narrow curve, hugging the bank in order to escape the full force of the current, when, without any warning but a screech and a bang, a huge canoe swung round the corner like an angry leviathan,

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collided crash-smash with the smaller one, and flung its occupants headlong into the water. Aka Ele had barely time to shout out that he was killed, certainly not enough to formulate the maledictions on his murderer which, together with unpleasantly much

"He was seized by an arm and jerked into the leviathan-like canoe."

brackish water, he felt surging within him, when he was seized by an arm and jerked into the leviathan-like canoe, where he alighted with a painfully definite bump on something hard and nobbly. Almost instantly his boy hurtled through the air and alighted violently plump in the middle of

him. For some seconds he breathed with difficulty or not at all. Then he collected his scattered faculties and looked up.

Sprawling in front of him on a cheap deck-chair lay an eminent Sierra Leonian trader, a Mr. Jones-Evans, whom he knew well by reputation—if one may so strain the word as to connect it with Mr. Jones-Evans—as one of the most prosperously dishonest traders in Otoka. He was elaborately dressed in spuriously European fashion. Though it was nearly dark, he still had on a large mushroomic sun-helmet; he made up for the

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absence of collar and tie by the presence of a diamond collar-stud and three very strident tie-pins. He wore a bracelet on each wrist, self-assertive rings on most of his fingers, trousers checked like a sponge-bag seen through a microscope, and somewhat tired-looking patent-leather brown boots. He was puffing at a large cigar, of which both the smell and the label were rather more pronounced than pleasant. The canoe was heavily laden with cotton, palm-oil, and other merchandise, and was being paddled by some two dozen "boys" of all sizes and ages.

"*Ach*, you have kill me!" spluttered Aka Ele, wriggling into a sitting posture.

"Ho, you talk English, indeed, oh?" answered Mr. Jones-Evans. "I thought, my fren', you was some bushman of this part."

"Bushman! Me!" spat Aka Ele—really the brackish water was very nasty. Then he became conscious that most of his garments had been washed away, and that he was clothed in little more than modesty and the key of his house, which at starting he had taken the precaution to tie to his wrist.

"You have kill me," he repeated, "and you take my cloth! You t'ief! I will summon you!"

"You lie, my fren'! I do not take your cloth. I have save your life, and you have no thanks for me but curses!"

"I no lie! And you sink my canoe, and all my goods and cash moneys! *Ach*, you shall pay me!"

"The canoe was worn and worthless. You had but a mat with you. Bah, you naked savage!"

"You beastly lie! I was going to market! I had twenty pounds thirteen shillings and sisspence in cash moneys—silver moneys—and a box of corals, they cost me too much! You shall pay me fifty pounds!"

"Ah! Tchi! Fifty pounds! Tck! I am not so foolish as I seem."

"I do not know," interpolated Aka Ele, "but you shall——"

"You talk to me of fifty pounds! Yah! Bah! You should thank me extremely to have save your dirty life," sneered Mr. Jones-Evans, "for your face—ugh!—it makes me feel sick!" he added nastily.

"My face! My—— Ah! Yah! Wah! You! Your head is empty, it is full of mud! It is like a monkey, a goat! Ah! Stop! Here is where I live. Hi! Yi! Stop! Stop!" Aka Ele screeched to the boys, but unavailingly; they paddled their hardest, and thoroughly enjoyed his discomfiture. Goaded to desperation, he bawled briefly some impolite criticisms and aspirations regarding Mr. Jones-Evans's parentage, his past, his future, and his present, and then, jumping into the stream, he struggled ashore. The last thing he saw, as he put foot on dry land, was a large, white, scornful grin radiating through the gathering dusk, which only too certainly grew on the face of Mr. Jones-Evans.

"Ta-ta, dear boy!" sneered the lips that encircled the grin.

"Bah! Yah! You nigger!" yelled Aka Ele, wet, cold, naked, very much ashamed, but keeping to the end insult's crown of insult—the one word in West Africa which is unnamable, unthinkable, unforgivable.

* * * * *

Early the next morning, Mr. Jones-Evans arrayed himself in purple and fine, if not quite clean, linen, and made his way to the District Court at Otoka, where he interviewed the District Officer and Presiding Magistrate, a hard-headed Scotchman named Stevenson.

It is unnecessary to follow his verbose perversion of the previous evening's occurrences. Eventually he obtained a civil summons against Aka Ele for "forty-nine pounds nineteen shillings and ninepence, damages for slander." Had he assessed them at so much as fifty pounds, he knew the case would, after the law's delays and according to the local regulations, have to be tried before a higher court, and he thirsted for immediate vengeance.

It is, too, unnecessary to detail Aka Ele's remarks when he received the summons, as also Stevenson's comments, a few mornings later, when he had heard the case, and elicited the more or less true facts thereof. He sent Mr. Jones-Evans away with a flea in his ear, and warned him fluently of the probable consequences of his again attempting to waste the time of the court.

Elated at the turn of events, Aka Ele remained behind, and, doing his best to put tears into his voice and hunger into his eyes, he begged for leave to sue *in forma pauperis* for the recovery of the value of the lost canoe and its alleged contents, forty-nine pounds nineteen shillings—everything he possessed in the world, he explained, with a quite cleverly-executed sob. But Stevenson happened to know something about the incomes of the traders of the Aka Ele class, and most emphatically refused to issue any

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summons until every one of the prescribed fees had first been paid—in fact, as he dismissed the applicant, he added a few trenchant remarks as to what he thought of the application.

A hundred yards or so away from the court, Aka Ele—not too obviously on purpose—overtook Mr. Jones-Evans. Aka Ele was haughty, Jones-Evans sulky and defiant.

"Good mornin', my fren'," condescended the former.

"Ugh! Wugh!" shrugged the other.

"You vex! Ah, I do not wonder. The District Officer spoke to you with some asperity—not so? Ah! Ha! But you can vex more ver' soon, for I now take out action against you myself for my canoe and all the goods you despoil. Ah, yes! And the District Officer does not like you. That was clear jus' now. He will therefore award me my full claim—forty-nine pounds nineteen shillings. Yah! Good mornin'."

Poor Mr. Jones-Evans, beaten in his recent attempt to "bounce" the law, chagrined at defeat, his ears still burning with the fiery-phrased remarks recently flung at him by an irritable, and justly irritated, official, wobbled, and—

"One moment, my fren'," he ventured.

"I have no time to talk with you," he received.

"This action, you say," he persisted, "will you perhaps come to a term or terms about it? It was an accident. My canoe was borne by the current so strong as it was, It was the finger of Providence. I am a poor man. I will pay you five pounds to settle."

"Five pounds! Five pounds! Wah! I have already expended near that sum in court fees. Ha, listen to him!" freely lied Aka Ele, apostrophising space. "And you will receive the summons this same very afternoon"—he pursued the advantage which he read on the face of the other—"and you will pay my claim nex' week with costs, by order of the court! Five pounds, indeed! Shall we see? Good mornin'!"

"Oh, but please——" whined Mr. Jones-Evans. Like all bullies, he was an abject coward, and was even prepared to admit defeat in order to avoid the painful possibility of receiving a blow. "I will—you will——" he stuttered.

"Forty-nine pounds, nineteen shillings; costs, three pounds ten shillings; total, fifty-four pounds nine shillings," pronounced Aka Ele, smiling almost as genially as would a hungry hyena.

"Ah, I cannot! I am a poverty man, indeed. I will pay you half—twenty-three pounds, and finish the palaver," returned Mr. Jones-Evans, whose mental arithmetic was weak but shrewd.

"Mista Jones-Evans," mouthed Aka Ele, turning upon him and adopting the voice and manner of a locally eminent coloured preacher, "I will not be hard upon you. I will be indeed very kind. I do not forget that we are fellow—er—fellows living for a brief space in the midst of a hard and cruel world. I will even forgive you — yea, seventeen times seven. You shall pay me forty-seven pounds for my so severe and so heavy losses, and we will be at peace henceforth."

"I cannot, I cannot," wailed the other; "it would undo me!"

"Ver' well. The action will proceed, and when it is heard, I shall also inform the District Officer with something that came to my knowledge last week—or was it two week pass?" Aka Ele drew a bow at a venture, and was rewarded beyond his most sanguine expectation at the instantaneous jump which resulted.

"You do not know!" quavered Mr. Jones-Evans, mopping his brow, beneath which the cheeks had turned to sepia. "It is impossible you have been told."

"Of course I know—everything, every single thing." Aka Ele uttered each syllable slowly and emphatically, while he cudgelled his inventiveness for some further mystery should necessity arise. "Ah, yes, and I can give you the name of my informer, too"—he drew another bow, a long one—"but I shall not," he concluded.

"He has betrayed me, then!" spluttered his victim in an agony of perspiration. "He is—I will——" He became inarticulate; then, mistaking Aka Ele's bewilderment for inflexibility, he added: "Yes, yes, you are hard and indeed cruel. I will pay you what you demand, forty pounds, and then we shall done finish."

"Forty pounds!" echoed Aka Ele. "Ah! Ha! Forty pounds!" Something in what he didn't say seemed to frighten Mr. Jones-Evans, for he promptly collapsed into: "Forty-seven pounds! Pardon! Error! All prone. This world. Oh! Ho! Oh!" His long-protracted groan might have softened a tombstone. It certainly didn't affect Aka Ele, who replied with business-like alacrity—

"And you will give me an I.O.U. for the amount, one time, this same very morning, and you will also affix a stamp upon it,

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and sign it in the presence of a witness. Ah, yes, Mr. Thomas, at the post office yonder, will do; he is a friend of yours, I know."

Apparently abased and abashed by whatever replaced a conscience in his unlovely anatomy, Mr. Jones-Evans thereupon followed Aka Ele to the post office, signed an I.O.U as suggested, except merely that he insisted on Aka Ele's acknowledging on it that it was a receipt in full for all the actual and moral damages caused him in the canoe episode. This he handed to Aka Ele, who was too vain to admit that, though he could sign his name, he couldn't read. Then he moved away; and the grin that radiated through the midday glare, and which centred on Aka Ele's face as he tied the I.O.U. in a corner of his cloth and watched Mr. Jones-Evans's departing figure, was not unlike the label and perfume of that gentleman's cigars—exceedingly pronounced, also exceedingly unpleasant.

Equally pronounced, however, and no less unpleasant, was his expression—indeed, were his expressions—a few days later, when he discovered the I.O.U. to have been made out not for "forty-seven pounds," but for "forty-seven pence." In fact, they were horrid.

DAHLIA DAYS.

WHEN the gardens are dishevelled, and the season's at the *slack*,
And summer's crown of glory's getting tarnished,
When the foliage is shabby, and the ground begins to crack,
And orchards are acidulously garnished,
When roses have departed, and the nightingale is still,
When aborescent redolence is practically nil,
When a yellow leaf meanders by in chill prognostication,
Warm-hearted dahlias unfold and save the situation.

They star our cottage gardens with a dozen different hues—
Majenta, damask, salmon-pink, and tawny;
They frame the rustic scandal-mongers, primed with village news,
Their idle arms akimbo, bare and brawny.
On silent Sunday courtings, the maidens to cajole,
They amply fill a vacancy in Hodge's buttonhole,
For be he never so slow-tongued and shy of heart revealings,
The fiery dahlia will plead the fervour of his feelings.

An ointment not infrequently is blemished by a fly,
The fairest rose presents the sharpest prickle,
A nasty little maggot in a luscious pear will lie,
And canker coats the corn within the sickle.
Obedient to this natural but disappointing law,
A radiant dahlia, alas, will also show its claw;
Though very few its claim to hue and shape will be refusing,
In every velvety recess you'll find an earwig snoozing.

JESSIE POPE.

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THE FEUD.

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS,

Author of "Kings in Exile," "Neighbours Unknown," "More Kindred of the Wild," etc.

THE dog was a handsome, heavily-built nondescript, a mongrel, but a mongrel of distinguished blends. Muzzle and ears and the aristocratic dome of the skull showed the large strain of hound in his ancestry. The wavy, red-gold coat and feathering of tail and legs told of the Irish setter in his line, while bowed and shortened legs, the massiveness of chest and shoulder, were eloquent of the incongruous dash of bull. With such warring elements in his blood, his temper, as may be imagined, was none too certain; but his intelligence kept him from letting it get him into serious trouble, while his fidelity and courage, as well as his striking appearance, led the farmer who owned him to set great store by him. As a watch-dog he was the terror of the tramps, who, after vain efforts to cajole him into complaisance or lure him with poisoned tit-bits, came to give his neighbourhood a wide berth.

But in spite of his duties as a watch-dog, he was by no means always to be found at his post. The farmer had taken no pains to train him to stay at home. He had been brought up quite as casually as he had been bred, and, being an independent backwoods dog, he had no idea at all that his duties required him to be always lounging about the farmyard. Moreover, the strain of Irish setter in his veins made him restless and curious. He was given to ranging the open, hillocky, upland pastures where the surly woodchucks had their holes, or exploring the deep woods down the valley in search of adventure. He was capable of making an adventure out of very insignificant material—a mouse-hole under a root would often suffice to keep him digging frantically for an hour, as if convinced that something wonderful and new lay hidden at the bottom. But his real desire was an adversary that would give him a good fight—something to satisfy the vague but fiery craving in his great jaws and mighty muscles and emulously pugnacious heart.

Driven by this desire, he would follow up the trails of bear and lynx with hopeful and misguided enthusiasm; but, happily for him, the bears and the ripping-clawed Canada lynxes scrupulously kept out of his way. A bear would have made short work of him; and as for the lynx, though he would have come off victorious in the battle, he would have been so ripped by the great cat's eviscerating claws that he would probably have bled to death on the triumphal journey home. But both bears and lynxes eyed him with too much suspicion to think of risking an encounter with him. They had seen him in the company of the farmer and the farmer's gun. Therefore they were always sure that, whenever they saw him alone, the farmer and the farmer's gun must be lurking somewhere in the neighbourhood, ready to pounce out upon them if ever they should be so rash as to attack the dog.

Of course, both in the woods and in the upland pastures there were other adversaries on whom the dog might have vented his longing for a fight. There were the porcupines, and there were the skunks. But the dog knew too much to want to get himself stuck full of quills like a pin-cushion full of pins, and his nostrils were too sensitive for him to tolerate the idea of coming to close quarters with a skunk. So, when he encountered either of these indolent and arrogant little prowlers, he gave them the path without shame, and took every care not to ruffle their feelings.

It happened on a certain spring morning, while the green of the birches was still tender and diaphanous, that the vain pursuit of a rabbit led him much further over the uplands than he had been wont to range. He lost the trail at last, turned aside in ill-humour, ran softly over a low, sunny ridge, and came plump among a litter of young foxes playing about their hole.

Three whisking reddish streaks vanished

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into the hole. But the fourth cub was yawning, with his eyes closed, at the instant of the dog's arrival, and lost precious seconds. He jumped like a loosed spring, but he was just too late. A pair of inexorable jaws closed upon the ruddy brush of his tail and held him fast.

Baby though he was, he was game, and he curled back to snap savagely at his huge captor. Another moment, and his neck would have been crushed between the dog's great jaws; but in that same moment the red vixen, his mother, came to his rescue. With a shrill yelp of rage, she hurled herself upon the adversary, and her narrow jaws slashed him deeply in the neck.

Startled at the swift fury of this attack, the dog dropped his prize and turned with a deep growl upon his fiery little assailant. She tried to evade him, but he was too quick for her, and caught her in his grip, while the released cub crept trembling into the hole.

The fatal misfortune for the brave little mother was the strain of bull in her antagonist's pedigree. Had he once let go in order to take a new hold or to bite again in some more deadly part, with her incredible quickness and wiriness she would have twisted free and mockingly eluded him. But he never let go. He simply went on biting and chewing deeper, deeper, and ever deeper. The vixen tore and slashed valiantly, till the dog's rich coat was crimsoned with his blood. But as she was gripped, her firm jaws could not reach him in any vital spot, nor could they bite deep enough really to divert him. Suddenly her mouth opened wide in a harsh yelp, ending in a gurgle, and her head fell to one side limply. Growling deeply, the victor shook her a little, to make sure she was not shamming. Dropping her indifferently, he went and sniffed at the hole, and finally trotted away toward home.

It had not been enough of a fight to get his bull blood thoroughly aroused, but out of it were to follow consequences which he little anticipated.

Some ten minutes later the father fox came trotting up to his den. At sight of the body of his mate, sprawled limp before the entrance, he stopped and stood rigid, eyes and ears and nostrils wide with startled question. After perhaps half a minute, he stole forward and sniffed the body over minutely. Then he sniffed at the dog's tracks, while the stiff hair rose on his neck. Lastly, he slipped into the hole and assured himself as to the safety of the young ones. Emerging a minute or two later, he returned to the body of his mate, gave it a hasty, compassionate lick, and started off on the trail of the dog.

II.

THE dog lay just outside the farmyard fence, licking his wounds. They were not deep, the jaws of the brave vixen having had so poor an opportunity of doing themselves justice, but they were smarting cuts and numerous, and the dog was feeling very ill-tempered over them.

All was quiet about the farmyard, the men being away at work in the fields, the womenfolk busy in the house. Nothing stirred but a few chickens scratching in the straw far at the other side of the yard. Presently the dog, tired of licking his bites, laid his head between his paws and went to sleep. Just as he did so, a large red fox, with a magnificent plumy brush, appeared around the fence corner some forty or fifty feet away, and stood, with one fore-paw uplifted, to eye the dog.

In the narrowed, gleaming eyes of the new-comer there was a look of cold fury, of a set, considering hate that was not going to baulk itself by haste. Yet here, it seemed, was the instant opportunity. The dog's head faced the other way, and he was obviously asleep. The avenger glanced all about him carefully, to assure himself that he was in no danger of being taken by surprise. Then he crept forward, noiseless as thistledown on his light and tufted pads.

The avenger was no rash hot-head, ready to sacrifice himself in the uncertain hope of achieving his vengeance. It was his foe alone that he would punish, not himself and the motherless whelps in his den on the uplands. He knew that in a fight he was no match for the dog, who was more than thrice his weight and of fighting feud. Moreover, he understood the dog's method of fighting—that implacable grip that would never let go while life lasted. He had no intention of letting that grip once close upon him. His trust for the vengeance which he was set upon lay in his ingenuity, his keen and far-seeing craft. He did not underrate the dog's intelligence, but he was confident in pitting his own against it.

Within a couple of yards of the dog's hindquarters he paused, gathered his legs beneath him, and pounced forward like lightning. His hope was to hamstring his enemy by one lucky slash of his keen jaws.

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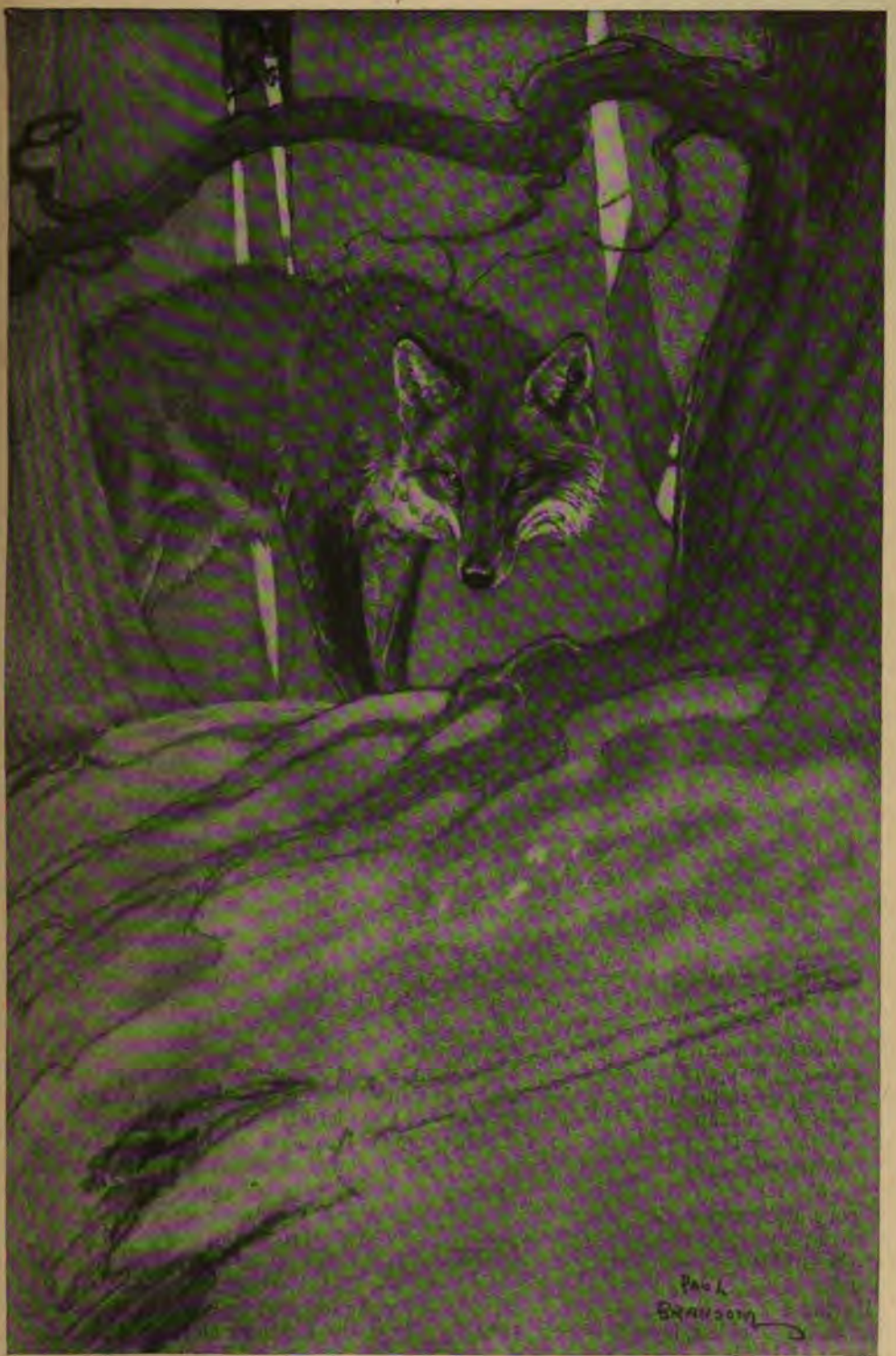

"Eyes and ears and nostrils wide with startled question."

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But in the very instant of his leap, the dog moved — perhaps warned by some subtle admonition to ear or nostril — and the assailant's teeth merely ripped a red gash down over his haunch. With a startled snarl, he whipped about to grapple with this unlooked-for assailant. But the fox had leaped back as lightly as he had come, and was now a dozen feet away, staring at him with baleful eyes of challenge.

With a deep growl, the dog gave chase. And the fox fled away before him, not towards the den in the uplands, but straight back towards the forest.

For his weight and build, the dog ran well enough, having sound wind and tireless muscles. But his light and wiry adversary could have left him out of sight in five minutes. This, however, was no part of the fox's plan. With consummate craft, he ran heavily, as if it took all his best effort to keep ahead; and the dog, being too angry to see through this play-acting, was encouraged to imagine himself on the point of catching and punishing the insolent creature who had dared to attack him on his own threshold.

In leading his enemy toward the forest, no doubt the fox had some sinister purpose in view, but in this instance he failed to develop it. As the dog ran on, his anger gradually cooled down. As he found himself, after fifteen minutes or so of very tiresome effort, apparently no nearer to overtaking the brush-tailed fugitive, he remembered things he wanted to do at home. There was a bone to dig up, and another one to bury. After all, he had, as yet, no deep grudge against this fox, whom it had not occurred to him to associate with that hurried little affair at the burrow on the uplands.

As for a bite, *that* was no indelible insult. His pace slackened. The fugitive tried to feign lameness, but it had no effect. All at once the dog stopped short, smelled carefully at a bush, as if finding some delightfully interesting scent upon it, then turned his back and coolly trotted off homewards. The fox stared at him irresolutely for a few moments, and then, apparently deciding to postpone his vengeance or think out a more effective plan for it, took his own way, along the skirts of the wood, to his den in the uplands.

Having the whole care of the motherless litter on his shoulders, in spite of the burning urgency of his hate, the fox had no time, during the next few days, to journey to the farm and seek the dog again. At last, the youngsters having been removed to another and more secluded burrow, and left with a whole rabbit to tear at in his absence, he went, late one night, to find his adversary. He found everything quiet at the farm, asleep under the soft spring moonlight; but the dog was about, probably chasing rabbits in the pasture fields. With bitter contempt, the fox made havoc of his enemy's kennel and his food-dish, together with several buried bones, which he dug up and scattered. Then, leaving the hen-roost and the duck-pen untouched, lest he should draw down upon himself the dangerous attention of the farmer, he trotted away, confident that his enemy would understand the enormity of the insults thus heaped upon him.

In this confidence he was not astray. The dog, returning tired and dew-drenched in the grey of the dawn, flew into a paroxysm of rage. His keen scent told him that his insulter was the same hardy animal who had so recently attacked him on his threshold, and then led him so futile a chase. And he began to realise that there was some more than ordinary grudge behind these virulent demonstrations. His anger burned itself down to a steady, dangerous glow: and, after studying all his enemy's work *till* the situation was pretty clear to him, he picked up the trail and started resolutely in pursuit. The feud was now fairly and reciprocally on, and he was no longer in a temper to be diverted from his purpose. He, too, was set on vengeance.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the farmstead, the fox's trail was nearly an hour old, but before long it grew fresher. Hoping to be followed, the fox had lingered by the way, catching a few belated mice, and beetles yet torpid with the morning chill, and a brooding ground-sparrow asleep upon her eggs. At last, looking back from the top of a little knoll, he saw his pursuer labouring doggedly along his trail. He waited motionless till the dog caught sight of him and gave tongue savagely. Then he ran on, keeping a lead of less than a hundred feet.

At first it looked as if the crafty fugitive's object was merely to wear out his heavy pursuer, and so diminish the odds of weight and muscle against him. For well over an hour he led the chase hither and thither over the roughest and most difficult ground, where his lightness and his knowledge of faint trails enabled him to spare himself to the utmost. But he seemed at the point of

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exhaustion; he looked as if he were being slowly but surely overtaken. His pursuer, panting heavily, and with streaming tongue far out, was hardly more than a dozen yards behind.

At length the fugitive, as if pressed beyond endurance, and about to seek retreat in some hole in the rocks, turned and ran straight, in what seemed to be a last frantic burst of speed, up a naked slope, the crest of a little rocky ridge. Reaching the crest, he vanished over it without a pause. The dog came racing up, but instead of following on over, as the fox had evidently expected him to do, he checked himself abruptly before reaching the brink, and went and peered down with a prudence which showed that he was not so easily to be entrapped.

The other side of the ridge was a perpendicular drop of some forty or fifty feet into a raging torrent.

Had he not stopped himself when he did, the dog would have inevitably plunged over headlong, and the affair would have been settled conclusively. But, fortunately for him, he knew the place. It did not occur to him, even, that his enemy could have expected him to fall over. He merely thought that the fox had a hiding-place in the crevices under the brink, and what concerned him was to find that hiding-place.

Presently he made out the merest shadow of a ledge descending for a few feet and vanishing under a jutting overhead. The scent of the fugitive was strong on this slender and perilous track. Only a creature of marvellous sure-footedness and lightness could have taken it securely. For the dog it was utterly impossible. He sniffed at it with disgust, and then, realising that the brink itself was showing a tendency to crumble under his weight, he drew back, sat down on his haunches, lifted his muzzle toward the sky, and howled his wrathful discomfiture. In the middle of this outburst he chanced to turn his head. There, on the very edge of the steep, not twenty paces distant, sat the fox, eyeing him from narrowed lids, inscrutably.

The dog felt all at once that he was being mocked. It was a new and humiliating experience to him. Almost blind with rage, he darted once more in pursuit.

This time the fox ran off in a new direction, up a long, broken slope traversed by bare ledges. The chase led at length through a shallow cleft, which narrowed gradually till the rocks met overhead, forming a flat, arched tunnel perhaps a foot and a half in height. Here, along the dry fissures, protected alike from the rain and from the attacks of the honey-loving bears, a runaway swarm of bees had established itself and multiplied to an enormous colony. At this hour of the morning the bees were just beginning to stir themselves and get ready for the day's work in the sun, gathering the perfumed spring pollen.

The fox knew well this perilous passage, having surveyed it shrewdly from the sides, though, of course, he had never ventured to pass through it. Now he lingered, as if cornered, till the dog was within a dozen yards of him. Then, putting on a tremendous burst of speed, he dashed through the tunnel, elongating himself till he was flat to earth, but managing to flick the swarming combs with his brush as he sped beneath them. With no worse punishment than two or three stings and a few bees clinging in his fur, he passed safely through, and dashed into a dense mass of bushes to scrape off his assailants. But he left the bees thoroughly aroused, and buzzing with anger.

Into this scorching vortex of live flame the dog plunged blindly. In a second he realised the situation. Yelping with the sudden torture, he backed out, covered with bees from head to foot, and went leaping convulsively down the slope, the air black and humming behind him.

By sheer good luck—for he did not see at all where he was going—he crashed through a fringe of scrub and fell into a deep, icy pool. The relief was instantaneous, and the shock brought back his wits. The bees which clung to him were drowned out, washed off, and chilled to instant harmlessness. When he came to the surface, certain members of the following hosts pounced down at him, but, for the most part, the furious insects could not make out how he had vanished. They hung humming over the bushes and over the pool, but they seemed apprehensive about descending too close to the sunken surface of the water, repelled, no doubt, by the darkness and the chill. The dog thrust his head under a thick tuft of wet weeds, where it was well protected, and waited there for the insects to get tired of looking for him. By the time this arrived, he was half dead with cold; but, dragging himself out cautiously and slinking away under the thickets, he gained a place where he could lie and warm himself in the sun. Then, with eyes and nostrils swollen and burning, and his whole hide smarting with the poison that had been pumped into

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it in that awful half minute, he made his way dejectedly homeward.

Now, though the dog was very far from guessing that his astute antagonist had deliberately led him into the citadel of the bees, his rage, nevertheless, burned with sevenfold heat because of that agonising discomfiture. The next time the fox came to the farm to taunt him, he took up the pursuit with such a fiery vigour that the fugitive was for a time somewhat put to it to keep ahead. This time the chase led away in quite another direction, down the valley toward the dark tamarack swamps which the dog had never been tempted to explore.

There was now no playing on the part of the fox. Disappointed in his former schemes for vengeance, and almost daunted at last by the deadly pertinacity of his foe, he was beginning to grow uneasy, and to want the affair off his shoulders. While the dog's rage was growing daily, his own craving for vengeance was beginning to cool as his grief for his slain mate moderated. Life was full of interest, and he wanted to think of other things than this feud. He was none the less resolved, however, that his enemy should be punished. So to-day he ran straight to his purpose, with the grim pursuer close on his heels.

In a secret place in the swamp, some twenty-four hours earlier, a bear cub had been born. The place was hard to come at, over narrow causeways of twisted roots and fallen, slippery trunks, but, when reached, it was little more than a shallow recess under a boulder, with a big cedar slanting in front of it. The mother bear lay here on a bed of dry moss, nursing her baby, and from time to time glaring jealously about the sombre shades as if she expected something to come and try to snatch the little one from her embrace.

At the moment when the fox appeared, running noiselessly, the bear was not looking. Her great black head was bent down while she licked and snuggled the cub. A ruddy shape touched the moss close beside her, and was gone even before she could lift her head, leaving a taint on the heavy air. In a blaze of anger and alarm, she thrust the whimpering little one behind her and sat up on her haunches just as the dog, with a startled yelp, brought up sharply within two feet of her. He had barely saved himself from jumping square on top of her.

With all his courage and his craving for a fight, the dog had no wish to tackle a mother bear suckling her cub. He sprang aside, striving to retreat the way he came. But the bear, hurling her massive bulk forward with amazing agility, had instantly cut off that retreat. Doubling on himself, he leaped for another prostrate trunk which offered a way over the ooze-pit. He gained it, but it was slippery with ancient slime, and he missed his foothold, his hindquarters dropping back into the black mud. Shrinking small and hunching his back desperately, he clawed at the hard trunk and strove to draw himself clear of the impending doom. But even as he strove, with open mouth and protruding tongue and frightened, staring eyes, a great black paw descended upon him, smashing his back. . The bull blood in him, asserting itself at this supreme moment, forbade him to cry out, and, writhing himself about, he locked his jaws upon that shattering paw. The next second he was twitched forth upon the moss, and crushed out of all resemblance to a dog. And as the bear, in her mother rage, mauled and tore the lifeless body, the fox, sitting on his haunches some forty feet away, looked on and licked his chaps, content at last with his vengeance.

AUTUMN CROCUSES.

WITH lovely hues the meadow flames all day,
With mauve and lilac and bright amethyst,
Till twilight turns its glow to tend'rest grey,
And fills the hollows with faint purple mist,
Where wind that stirs the blossoms with his wing
Wafts hence sweet odours like lost dreams of Spring.

AUGUSTA HANCOCK.

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TOLLINGTON'S YOUNGEST.

By E. M. JAMESON,

Author of "A House Divided," etc.

TOLLINGTON turned slowly towards home, his sturdy, thick-set figure battling doggedly against the elements. As he neared the corner of the street where his house lay, he stopped uncertainly on the drenched pavement, as if debating whether to go forward or back. Though the rain fell in torrents, his umbrella was neatly furled under his arm, to the detriment of his silk hat, whose gloss was fast disappearing under the downpour. Round the corner a blustering south wind met him, and, as if determined to complete its ruin, whipped it from his head and sent it rolling along the muddy street.

Tollington was in no mood to consider head-gear. It would have remained at the wind's mercy had not a tramp, slouching along in the distance, retrieved it for him. He shambled up to Tollington, wiping the mud from the brim with a sleeve begrimed and ragged.

"Thank you, my man." Tollington accepted the hat fastidiously, and did not replace it on his head. "Here, wait a minute." He unbuttoned his thin overcoat and fumbled in his pocket, bringing forth a handful of coins.

The eyes of the tramp glistened, and Tollington selected a larger coin than he had meant to give.

The man, mumbling some inarticulate words, prepared to shuffle off again.

"Here, wait a minute," said Tollington for the second time, his ugly face, usually so genial, looking drawn and grey beneath the brilliant light. "Anyone dependent on you?"

The man, only half comprehending, shook his head, his eyes not on Tollington, but on the coin in his own filthy palm.

"Any house to keep up?" queried Tollington.

The tramp gave a short laugh like a snarl. He wanted to be off to satisfy his wolfish hunger. "What are you getting at? Looks like it! If I'd a roof over my head, I'd be indoors and comfortable on a soaking night like this. It's only you rich men can afford to stroll about in it with your umbrella under your arm."

There was the ghost of better days in his accent. Some poignant feeling seemed to tug at Tollington's heart-strings. He dived into his pocket for another coin.

"Here, catch! It won't make a ha'porth of difference. You wouldn't believe me if I said you're lucky to have no responsibilities. Sometimes we so-called rich men envy a chap like yourself, whose hat—even a tattered one—covers all his cares. It's easier to face troubles when they simply touch yourself—when they can't make wreckage of other people's lives. There, be off! I'm only soliloquising."

He broke into laughter that startled the tramp, who shuffled off at top speed, leaving his benefactor to turn again with lagging steps towards home.

"Wonder if I shall ever sink to his level?" Tollington continued to soliloquise as he went. "I'm too old to begin all over again from the beginning. I couldn't face the struggle. To-night I'm just played out. Wanted to ask him a hundred questions, and daren't."

In the morning, uncertainty had seemed the one intolerable thing; now, in the evening, certainty, grim and implacable, was a thousand times harder to bear. A man never realises with how firm a grip hope has fastened upon him until the last loophole is closed. And during the day this had happened to Tollington of the City.

Arrived at his house, he mounted the wide stone steps and inserted his key, letting himself into surroundings on which no expense had been spared, where he himself, with the rain streaking his grey hair in lines down his forehead, was the only unsightly blot. Even Manning, the imperturbable, allowed a spasm of surprise to cross his face at the sight of his master's condition. It was only an instantaneous lapse, however,

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for when he received the dripping coat, the neatly-furled umbrella, and the ruined hat, his countenance had returned to its usual immobility.

"Throw the hat into the dust-bin," said his master, with a shadowy replica of the laugh that had astonished the tramp. And then, wiping the rain from his face, he disappeared in the direction of his own den.

Manning, the imperturbable, continued for another instant to gaze thoughtfully into space. He had lived with City gentlemen before.

"Something's up," he told himself, holding at arm's length the mud-stained silk hat, which he had no intention of relegating to the dust-bin. "Don't like the look of things myself. Been plunging a bit too recklessly, I'll be bound."

To Tollington, as he went along the side hall, the house seemed extraordinarily quiet. There was something stifling about it, some quality that was born, perhaps, of the frightful apprehension that had lain upon him like a solid weight for days. But when he reached the room which had been his refuge for so many years, some of his trouble lightened.

It was supposed to be early summer outside, but the day had dawned grey and lowering, culminating towards evening in drenching showers.

His youngest sometimes provided him with a surprise. He found one now, on opening the door, in the shape of a cheerful little fire. Slippers—hideous buff leather things, worked years ago in red cross-stitch by Pamela, and long since deserving of oblivion—lay beside his easy-chair. On a table close by, a box of cigars kept company with a pile of those evening papers his soul loved, while in a vase on the writing-table stood the bouquet of pink roses Pamela had carried as bridesmaid on the previous day. Their perfume floated towards him, together with that of stale tobacco smoke. Tollington sniffed luxuriously as he took in the homely disorder that he and his youngest so reprehensibly loved. His eyes went to a portrait of himself and Pamela taken together on a seaside holiday, several years before. The while-you-wait photographer had managed very cleverly to do full justice to both his sitters. All Tollington's plebeian points were made the most of, while Pamela, long-legged and slim, perched on the arm of his chair, her cheek against his head, looked the perfection of good breeding. Lady Anne, his wife, pronounced the portrait vulgar, but then she said the same of many things Tollington and his youngest delighted in.

Just for a moment longer his eyes looked around the room. Something poignant tugged again at his heart-strings, and he may be forgiven for wiping away a dampness not entirely due to rain. Then his glance settled on a large square envelope propped against the clock on the mantelpiece. He recognised his wife's handwriting. She was away visiting with her two elder daughters, and they were due back in a couple of days.

Tollington's plebeian hand shook a degree as he tore open the letter. As he had expected, its brevity was mostly concerned with a request for a cheque. Tollington swore softly under his breath, and tore the scented sheet four times across, flinging it into the waste-paper basket. His face took on an added shade of greyness. He sat down heavily, leaning forward, elbows on knees, chin on clenched fists, looking into a future filled with blackness. There was no hope for him anywhere. Nothing short of a miracle could right things now. He was worn out, tired to death of struggling to keep pace with an extravagance that was not his own. He was the money machine. His wife had only married him for his wealth; he had found that out the day after the wedding. During the ensuing years, in her icy, perfectly well-bred way, she had contrived to keep the fact before him. She endured his plebeian qualities, as did his two elder daughters, because he was the machine that turned out the shekels. He had worked at top speed to keep pace with them, to deserve even that small place in their regard, and now he and they had to reap the whirlwind. In a few days all the country would know that Hobday Tollington was unable to meet his liabilities. He groaned in bitterness of spirit, then, glancing round, he caught sight of Pamela's portrait. She would have to suffer with the rest, his dearest, his one ewe lamb, into whose path, as yet, not even a crumpled rose leaf had fallen. Pamela was his own; the other girls were their mother's. Even from their childhood he had felt a degree in awe of them. But never once had he regretted his marriage, since it had brought him Pamela. From the cradle some exquisite spark of sympathy had been kindled between them. Before she could walk she had borne him company on those high days and holidays when he had been allowed to steal her from the nursery, lying contentedly on a rug in his den, taking kindly to tobacco smoke, ready to chuckle

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joyously when he snapped his fingers at her or carried her round the room in his arms. At first he had been half afraid to touch such an amazing piece of mechanism, holding on to the bundle of cambric with fingers clenched unnecessarily hard; but his happiest moments were those when she fell asleep in his arms, and he watched over her slumbers, his cheek pressed to the downy little head.

As she emerged from the crawling stage into the sturdiness of socks and strap shoes, he remembered the joy it had been, at the end of a strenuous day, to look up from the road to see a golden head pressed close to the nursery window, watching for him, and to hear the subdued chuckle from the back of the hall, where, against all rules of law and discipline, she lurked in wait for him. His eyes turned now to the happy hunting-ground in the corner, where her rocking-horse had been stabled, and her toys heaped in an untidy pile. They were gone, cleared away into the limbo of half-forgotten things; but in their stead was the Sheraton bureau where Pamela wrote notes to her friends, and her little chintz chair near his own.

The chair was less occupied since she had made her bow to Society. She was in request everywhere, his little Pam, the beauty of her season, with men—big, strong men—competing for a look, a word, a dance. On her bureau yonder, in an ever-gathering heap, were her ball programmes, pink and blue and mauve.

She had turned many heads, his little Pam, had caused to ache several hearts, but so far she herself had emerged fancy free. During the past few months he had lived in a state of apprehension where jealousy loomed large; he wanted savagely to knock together the stupid heads of all her suitors. But now he wished a thousand times that one of them had whisked her off to that Eldorado whose seas are unruffled by the sudden storms of the Stock market.

The door opened with a swing; there came a faint rustle, a whiff of violets. Fortunately, his back was turned, for before he could snatch up a newspaper or school his face into a semblance, at least, of its customary expression, Pamela was upon him.

"There you are!" she exclaimed.

"Here I am," replied Tollington, with a ghost of a smile.

"Been rushed?" asked Pamela. Her quick ear had caught a shade of weariness.

"Rushed to death," said Tollington, feeling he might look at her now. "*Hul-lo, Pam!*"

She drew back in order to let him get the full effect, and pirouetted slowly before him. There was no doubt that she herself was entirely satisfied.

"I dressed early on purpose to surprise you," she said. "How do you like it?"

She was all in white satin to-night, with floating wreaths of silver mist about it. At least, Tollington, his tired eyes upon her, put it that way. To him she had always owned the sweetest, the most enchanting little face in the world, but to-night he realised that she was lovely beyond the usual run of girls—a slender, exquisite thing of infinite possibilities, standing a-tiptoe on the brink of womanhood.

"*Look* at me," said Pamela, with a laugh. "I planned it myself—the most expensive frock I've ever had. Mother doesn't spend much on *me*, you know. I'm tired of the simple kind. You'll foot the bill quite agreeably, won't you?"

"Turn round," said Tollington, that she might not see his face. "Jove, it *is* a pretty frock! Simple, too—just a scrap of satin and a few wisps of misty stuff—don't know what you call it. Yes, it's all right. Got your hair done differently, haven't you?"

Pamela, with due regard to the well-being of the misty stuff, sat down on the arm of his chair.

"It's the Jerninghams' ball to-night. Have you forgotten? Mrs. Kennedy is to call for me. I wish you'd agree to come. There's a room for bridge, you know. *Do* change your mind." She pressed her cheek against the top of his head, then drew back quickly. "Your hair is quite wet. Were you caught in the rain?"

"It is coming down in sheets." Tollington took out his handkerchief as she retreated, and rubbed his head vigorously. "My hat blew off, and I did not put it on again." He rose and moved towards the door.

"But weren't there any taxis around?" asked Pamela. "And why didn't you 'phone for the car? What a careless boy you are!"

She laughed in her gay fashion, but Tollington, filled with an appalling weariness, kept silent. Her face changed to gravity.

"Tired?"

"*Dog*-tired."

"Been worried in the City?

"M—yes, rather worried."

Pamela considered him gravely, her finger on her lip. The light from the electric

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bulbs brought out faint sparkles from her hair, and shone down on the whiteness of her throat and bare rounded arms. A mist blurred Tollington's vision for a moment. Such a little thing to face the world!

He turned to go, then, in his clumsy, slow fashion, came back a pace or two, putting out a forefinger to tilt her chin.

"I suppose we couldn't have a cosy evening just to ourselves, Pam, you and I? Let this affair slide, y'know? Invent some excuse? You wouldn't mind for once, old lady?"

A sudden horror at the thought of spending the evening alone had overwhelmed him. Pamela uttered a dismayed exclamation.

"I simply *can't* put this off; it would be impossible. Mrs. Kennedy is to call for me, and—and"—she coloured radiantly from brow to chin—"I'm pledged for ever so many dances. Sometimes I don't care a bit to go to places, but this ball I've been looking forward to for ages. *Do* you want me very much? Are you feeling ill, or just tired? If you are ill, of course I'll stay."

But her glance said more than speech. He kissed her, then forced a smile.

"Only tired and a bit worried, Pam. Want my dinner, I expect. Selfish brute to hint at such a thing, and you in a swagger new frock. Don't look remorseful, little girl; it was only a joke. If you think any more about it, I shall go one worse, and come too. Now let me run up and change."

During dinner, in order to deceive her, he summoned all his courage to the sticking-point, and it was still there when he put her cloak round her, kissing her very tenderly and tucking her into the electric brougham beside Mrs. Kennedy. But it fell away from him like a garment when he went back to his room, leaving nothing but an ever-gathering loneliness behind.

II.

It was after the third dance, in a palm-shaded corner of the conservatory, that Hugh Roydon asked Pamela to marry him.

They were both gloriously young and gloriously in love, and all the surroundings shimmered in a rose-coloured haze when he took her in his arms and kissed her.

For a long time no one came to disturb them in their solitude. Away in the distance a waltz tune sobbed and swayed towards their retreat, throbbing just the right accompaniment to their happiness. After a few moments they held hands and discussed the future in a language more practical than kisses.

"I wonder if they will let me have you?" said Roydon, with a boyish laugh. "They'll say I'm not half good enough for you, and, of course, I'm not. But what mortal man would be?"

Pamela's happy eyes fell beneath the passion of his glance.

"Father, at any rate, will understand. He will be glad."

Roydon drew her soft palm to his lips.

"On the contrary, he will feel like turning me out neck and crop. And, after all, how can he be expected to feel glad at the idea of handing you over to another chap's keeping? I'm frightfully sorry for him. The first time I saw you he was putting your cloak round you in the vestibule of the Gaiety, and you were laughing at him over your shoulder. I thought then what good pals you seemed. That night was the real beginning of life for me, Pamela."

"And for me," she agreed, her dazzled eyes looking into a future of glorious possibilities.

"Never thought much of my shekels before," went on Roydon meditatively. "Just took 'em as a matter of course. Pots of money, dear—more than I know what to do with. My tastes seem quite reprehensibly simple. But now"—he laughed—"I'm glad there's heaps of it for frocks like this"—he drew a wisp of gauze through his fingers with an air of possession she loved to see—"heaps for hats, for automobiles, and for jewels—pearls mostly, I think—ropes of them to deck my fairy queen."

Pamela drew his hand to her cheek and held it there.

"What do frocks and hats and pearls signify? Though I love pretty things, I could be quite happy without them. Love is what matters most." She was silent for a moment, her face eloquent. "Yes, he *will* miss me; we've been so much to one another all our lives." Her glance went to her lover in a vaguely questioning way that touched him to the heart. "You like him, Hugh?"

His arm went closely round her.

"We get on capitally. I only hope he won't start a prejudice against *me*. He has my heartfelt sympathy; it's confoundedly rough on him. I wonder how soon I may carry you off, Pam?"

"Not for a long, long time," said Pamela, with a protesting blush. Then, with her finger on her lip, she drew away from him. There had come a movement, the whiff of a

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cigar; someone had invaded their solitude, though the waltz still sobbed plaintively in the distant ballroom.

From the other side of the thick hedge of palms a man's voice came towards them, speaking in a low but very distinct tone. Pamela smiled up at her lover, and took her fan from him preparatory to departure. Then suddenly she remained motionless, the smile dying from her face.

"My dear chap, make no mistake. I tell you Tollington's affairs are badly on the down-grade; there are rumours in the City. He has been plunging heavily lately—seems to have lost his head. Been living at a terrific pressure for the past few years. Doesn't spend his money on himself, poor devil. He's simple enough in his tastes; no big lunches, y'know—just a grilled chop at the nearest restaurant. Sorry for him. Impossible for a man to pull up with a wife and daughters of such extravagant notions all dragging at him. He's had to grind the mill pretty hard to keep pace with them."

"You must be making some mistake," said another voice. "Tollington has had amazing luck—rolling in money."

"Wait a day or two, and you'll hear news about him. I ran into him a few hours ago, and he looked broken, I tell you. Seemed to have crumpled up suddenly—he doesn't get any younger. Now, I want to consult you about those Mexican investments you were speaking about."

Pamela put out a hand gropingly, as if for comfort, but, before Roydon could touch it, she drew away from him, her little silver slippers making no stir on the thick strip of carpet outspread upon the tesselated pavement.

Where the conservatory widened into the hall she paused and looked up at Roydon with eyes large and frightened. All the soft pink colour had left her cheeks, her lips trembled as if she struggled against tears. Roydon's heart ached for her.

"It's a lie!" he said furiously, though he, too, had heard rumours. "Dear, don't look like that! It is a miserable scrap of City gossip."

She shook her head.

"I must go home at once, before they all come streaming out of the ballroom. I could not bear it. Help me to get away!"

He fell in with her mood at once.

"Run and get your cloak; then we'll find a cab. There is no one about to see us—not even a servant, for the moment. Quick!"

She was back again in an instant, her cloak on her arm. He put it round her, and did not wait to fetch his own coat and hat. Just as the waltz melody died slowly to its close, they were outside on the steps together, the soft, moist air in their faces. It was still comparatively early, and the street was deserted of vehicles.

He felt a fierce resentment when he saw the little feet he loved stepping in their shining slippers through the mire. He wanted to pick her up, to carry her in his arms, close to his heart, dry-shod and sheltered from the hurt of gossiping tongues. Hitherto his love for her had been boy's love, worshipping, idealistic, but the sight of her frightened eyes swept him along on a tide of protecting passion that was all a man's love at its highest. He wanted to fight her battles for her, to make her troubles his own.

It was not until the end of the street was reached that they saw an empty four-wheeler. Roydon hailed it.

"Slow, but better to take what offers. It is beginning to rain."

He got in after her, telling the man to drive quickly, and the old horse went clop-clopping through the mud. Pamela, in her shining raiment, drew herself into the farthest corner of the cab. It cut him to the heart that she suddenly seemed miles away from him. He put out his hand and took the little gloveless one that lay upon her knee. It struggled to get free, but Roydon held on to it determinedly. Her head was turned away from him. He could only distinguish the pale rim of her cheek, and a line of golden hair framing it.

"Can't you see, Hugh? It is impossible now for me to marry you."

"I can't see, dear."

He put his arm round her and drew her close to him, his cheek against her hair. She sighed, then lay for a moment in his arms, trembling a little.

"I'm not going to argue," said Roydon very tenderly. "You told me you loved me; you can't have changed in a minute, so matters are exactly as we arranged them."

"But you must see that everything is different." She sat erect, half pushing him away, one small, insistent hand upon his breast.

Roydon's mouth grew more determined, harder in its lines.

"I see no difference."

"To-morrow you will be glad. I set you free."

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He stooped and kissed her passionately. "Love's not like that, darling."

She clung to him with a sob. "Oh, I know it isn't! But I can't marry you. He will want me now more than he ever did! You don't know how selfish I've been. That man who spoke about him had more sympathy than I. He wanted me to stay at home with him to-night, and I refused. He has been there all alone, worried to death—not a soul near him. It was true what you heard about our extravagance. I've just begun. This frock"—she clung to him like a child seeking comfort—"it cost a lot of money, Hugh, and, when I told him so, he never said a word. Something ought to have warned me." Her head was on his breast, tears wetting the lapels of his coat. A lump rose in his throat as he felt her trembling against him.

"Don't cry, dear. There, there—we'll straighten things out between us, you'll see. I've just thought of a plan. Don't cry." He kissed her tears away, and she leaned up of her own accord and kissed him back.

"A plan?"

"A splendid plan—just thought of it." He put his head out of the window. "Shake up that old steed of yours, cabby—we're in a hurry."

"If *only* it had been a taxi!" said Pamela.

"I'm glad it wasn't," said Roydon—"mightn't have had time to think of that plan. Here we are."

Pamela fumbled in her little satin bag for the latchkey.

"Father always sits up for me," she said, "and we talk over things, however late it is."

The door swung open. There was a light in the hall. Pamela stood for a moment as if listening, her cloak slipping from her shoulders, her glance upon the passage leading to her father's room. Her tension communicated itself to Roydon. He, too, found himself looking and listening. Pamela moved slowly along the corridor, and he followed, towards where a thin line of light showed.

As Pamela's fingers went to the door-knob, he put out his hand hastily.

"Wait a minute." He spoke on an impulse for which he could hardly account.

"Why?" queried Pamela, in a whisper, and she turned the handle. The door yielded, and they went in. The room seemed very quiet. The fire had died down to grey ashes, the pile of evening papers was untouched.

Roydon, a quick observer, saw a large envelope propped up on the mantelpiece, addressed to Lady Anne. Tollington was seated at his writing-table, his arms outstretched, his grey head dropped upon them. Roydon suddenly realised what his own vague dread had been. He put out an intercepting hand, but Pamela paid no heed. In her shining raiment she crossed the room swiftly and bent over the stooped figure. Then she looked round at Roydon, her finger on her lip.

"Asleep," she whispered. "He was tired to death."

Roydon's heart contracted at the words.

"Shall I wake him?" Pamela went on, in a whisper.

"No, no!" interposed the young man hastily, and Pamela withdrew the feather-weight of her hand.

Then, to Roydon's infinite relief, Tollington stirred and raised his head, looking at his youngest with blurred, sunken eyes.

"Hullo, Pam! Is that you? I was just dreaming of you—thought you were six again, thought we were——" His glance wandered to Roydon, and grew alert suddenly. He rose to his feet, his left hand resting on the edge of the writing-table.

Roydon held out his hand; something impelled him to rush matters.

"Pamela and I left early, Mr. Tollington. We wanted to tell you——"

"No, no," interposed Pamela, "not to-night—he is too tired. Besides, you remember——"

Roydon flashed at her a warning glance, and she broke off, fidgeting with a paper-weight upon the bureau. As she did so, her eyes lighted upon her own name scrawled across a sheet of paper lying on the blotting-pad.

"Why, you were writing to me when you fell asleep!" she exclaimed, smiling a little. "How odd! Did you want me so badly?"

Tollington looked confused. He took up the sheet of paper and tore it across. "Must have done it in my dreams," he said, a dull red flushing his face. "Felt dog-tired—haven't been sleeping well lately."

His hand edged towards something that lay half concealed under a loose sheet of blotting-paper. Roydon, too, had caught the glint of steel. He quietly dropped upon it the handkerchief thrust into his cuff, and Tollington's eyes met his in dumbly-spoken gratitude.

Pamela looked from one to the other.

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There was an atmosphere in the room she could not understand. Roydon turned suddenly and took her hand.

"Pamela has promised to be my wife, Mr. Tollington. I only want your consent to be the happiest man alive. I know it's frightfully rough on you, but——"

"'It's all right, Pam; we won't keep you long.'"

Tollington's heavy eyes brightened a degree.

"I shall be able to give her all the things you have given her," went on Roydon, in a kind of boyish flurry, "and I should like, if you don't mind, your consent at once, now, before I go."

Tollington looked from Pamela to the speaker and back again. Here was the Eldorado he had hoped for; his youngest, at all events, would be secured safe harbourage. Temptation surged within him. For a few hours longer he would keep to himself the chaos of his own affairs, until Pamela's were settled. An expression that held something of fierceness crossed his face.

Pamela felt vaguely troubled. In all her knowledge of him he had never looked like this.

"Don't worry him to-night, Hugh," she said. "To-morrow——"

"*To-night*," responded Roydon, his mouth determined. "I must have it settled to-night. Pamela"—he took her by the shoulders, looking down at her with an expression in his eyes that rejoiced Tollington's heart—"I want you to go right away for a

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few minutes while I talk over my—our affairs with your father. He will want to hear all about me before giving his consent. That's natural enough. He knows nothing at all, and, if it comes to that, neither do you, dear."

Pamela uttered a little protesting sound that was half a sob.

"I—*know*. Why, of course I know!" she said in a whisper that reached Tollington near the hearth; and, leaning up, she kissed her lover, her eyes full of love and trust. As she reached the door, she ran back to where Tollington stood looking down into the grey ashes of the hearth. He turned as she reached him, and she slipped her arms around his neck—they were almost of a height. Tollington kissed her very gently, then put her away from him, forcing a smile.

"It's all right, Pam; we won't keep you long."

She glanced again from one to the other, and went slowly from the room.

As the door closed upon her, Tollington walked back to the bureau and flicked aside the concealing handkerchief. Then very deliberately he took up the revolver and locked it away in a drawer. The letter addressed to his wife he had already destroyed. That accomplished, he faced Roydon, his features drawn and grey.

"Sit down," he said harshly. "We've got to have it out. I want my say first. I'm a ruined man, Roydon; it's only fair to tell you that. I can't meet my liabilities. Thought I'd keep it dark until"—he broke off, his face twisted and worn—"until I'd promised you my little girl, but I'm honester than I imagined—had to let you know the state of affairs before we talk about her. Must give you the option of drawing back, y'know—only fair. She has no idea."

Roydon's hand came down heavily on the bureau. "She heard something to-night. That is the reason she came back early. We both know, Mr. Tollington, but Pamela only fears the *possibility* of disaster—not the reality. To me"—he rose and paced the room, his boyish face pale and determined—"whether Pamela is rich or poor makes not the slightest difference. But the grief that touches her, touches me. Between us, we've just got to keep things going so that the little girl we both love need not suffer, as suffer she will if you go under. You're giving me your most prized possession, Mr. Tollington, and I'm going to suggest that we should put our heads together, you and I, to stave off ruin."

Tollington shook his head. "It can't be staved off; nothing but a miracle could do that."

"In the shape of a big sum of money?"

Tollington nodded.

"I'm rich," said Roydon quietly.

Tollington shook his head and pushed back his chair a degree, as if evading temptation.

"My father left me a huge fortune, absolutely my own. It has accumulated. My tastes are simple; I've had no one to spend it on. Pamela would be glad——"

Tollington thrust out his arms. His breath was coming in quick, short pants. Roydon, to give him a moment, took up the portrait of Pamela and looked at it closely. Then he put it down again.

"It will break Pamela's heart if you go under," he said. "For her sake, won't you consider my offer?"

"*No!*" replied Tollington roughly, getting up.

"Every man is liable to bad times," went on Roydon. "My father told me that he was on the brink once when a man he knew advanced him a sum that tided him over and laid the foundation of another fortune."

"*No!*" exclaimed Tollington for the second time, but with less roughness. Then he turned and held out his hand. "Roydon, you must understand that I can't take your offer."

"I neither see nor understand," replied the young man doggedly, his hands deep in his pockets, "and we'll shake hands, if you please, on a bargain—not otherwise. If I had a daughter like yours, I'd beg, borrow, or steal to keep her from suffering, and you've got to do the second before I leave the house to-night. If I choose to invest a sum with you—at a good rate of interest, you understand—why should you refuse?"

"*I can't*," said Tollington, sitting down again heavily. "Pam must suffer with the rest."

"Yours is the most abominable selfishness I ever heard of," said Roydon, in the same quiet way. "It's pretty hard that a man can't do as he likes with his money, especially when all his future happiness hangs on it. Oh, yes, I'm working for my own ends, as well as yours. If you are down under, if you choose deliberately to ruin yourself, do you think Pamela will leave you? No. You'll just drag her down to poverty with you, and spoil her life and mine. She loves me, but she has known you longest, and duty takes a most

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confoundedly stiff hold on a girl like Pamela. You'll be sorry when you realise all the things she has to give up for your selfish sake. She won't let you see how much she cares, but, if you've any conscience, you'll writhe fifty times in the day!"

"Let me think a minute," said Tollington, his head in his hands. "Stop talking. Let me *think*."

"Better use the time in action," said Roydon, taking up a pencil and sheet of paper. "My argument is unanswerable. Just give me some idea how much would see you through. You've a name for straight dealing in the City, and that's likely to stand you in good stead. I'm coming into partnership, whether you like it or not. Scribble down the amount you must have to keep you going."

Tollington, his hand jerky and uncertain, wrote down the figures. The younger man laughed.

"I'm good for three times that amount, and if need be, to save Pamela's happiness, I'd stake the lot. But as I want to spend some of it on pretty things for my wife, it's just as well to have a bit over." He laughed again; then, as Tollington said nothing, he leaned nearer, his young face suddenly grave. "It's a straight deal, Mr. Tollington. You're giving me Pamela; I'm investing money at a handsome rate of interest. Seems to me I score all along the line. Shall we shake hands on our bargain?"

Tollington stood up and straightened himself; some of the grey tension had left his face.

"God bless you, Roydon!" he said hoarsely, and went towards the hearth, where, mingling with the dying embers, the fragments of his letter to his wife had kindled a sudden flame—like hope.

Roydon heard the door close behind him. A moment later it opened again very softly. He turned, and Pamela was in his arms, close to his heart.

"Your plan must have been a good one," she whispered—"he looks altogether different."

"It is an admirable plan," replied Roydon, "and quite simple. Some day you shall hear about it. But now all that matters is that I love you, heart's delight!"

"*And I love you!*" said Pamela very softly, in response.

THE MORNING BATHE.

COME out, for it is morning, and the stars are on the grass;
The shadows of the hedgerow elms lie long and lush and green;
The gossamers are spread to net your ankles as you pass,
Or float, to curl across your cheek their fairy films unseen.

Come out across the meadows to the diving-pool we know
Beneath the red-ripe rowan boughs that fence and keep it cool:
There's a tumbling fall above it, and a freshet spreads below;
Between them, clear as amber, deep for diving, lies the pool.

Come, while the mist lies yet within the hollows of the hill,
While yet the hill's intenser blue is trembling into grey;
Come, while the air is tender, and the rougher winds are still,
And all earth's lines are lovely in the childhood of the day.

L. E. UPCOTT.

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THE MUD MAIDEN.

By C. FLEMING WILLIAMS.

O complex is the machinery of Fate that it is never wise to probe too deeply into its interior; it only leads to endless labour, and adds very little to the sum of human knowledge. Thus, in seeking to explain why Brenda should have chosen that day to have nautical aspirations, it were better to go no deeper than that she woke up in the morning with the unpleasant recollection that she had foozled at least six shots off the tee on the previous afternoon, and lost the match and her temper. Not badly, mind you, only enough to make her hit an inoffensive daisy, and ask for her niblick in a tired voice, but just enough to tip the scales in favour of going for a row on this particular day instead of going to the links. There was no direct logic in the decision, I grant, but if Fate is complex, the female mind can give it a stroke a hole and start the bye at the eleventh.

She found the exercise just the thing she craved for, that and the sweet salt air, carrying to her the plaintive cry of the curlew and the call of gulls. She pulled away steadily for an hour, paying little heed to extraneous things, lulled by the poetry of her own movement, and perhaps, being nineteen, by romantic day-dreams — pulled steadily seawards in the seductive embrace of a spring-tide ebb. It does not require a large knowledge of mathematics to figure out that if a boat moving at three miles an hour travel with a two-knot tide for one hour, the time taken to retrace the distance covered will be something over five hours. Brenda would have given you the answer in hours, minutes, and seconds, without turning a hair, but at the time she was quite unaware that she was formulating a neat arithmetical problem; she was just enjoying herself for a couple of hours, and intended to be back for lunch. She did not even know the tide was ebbing for quite a long time after she had turned to go back. She had been looking at a pretty farmhouse nestling among its barns and haystacks on the shore, and, after pulling leisurely for twenty minutes, noticed that it seemed to remain in the same relative position, whereas it ought to have been some way astern. Then she woke up. She was annoyed with herself for being stupid enough to row with the tide for so long a time, and felt angry with the boatman for not warning her.

"Brennie, my girl," she said to herself, "you are a pig! You said nasty things to your caddie yesterday because you *couldn't* play for rotten apples, and now you want to slay the boatman for your own carelessness. Get on with the job, and don't snivel." By her language you can see that she was quite a modern young lady, with opinions of herself healthily frank and humble. However, she kept those opinions for private use.

Then the man appeared. You probably guessed that at the beginning, when I mentioned Fate. He looked as though he washed, and rowed his dinghy with the short stroke of a yachtsman.

Brenda did not see him till he was quite close. She had noticed him, of course, but well-bred young ladies' eyesight can be exceedingly defective. In fact, she only "saw" him when he spoke.

"Can I be of any assistance?" he said. "I see you are making very little way *against* the tide. It will take you a long time to get back at that rate."

He only meant to give ample justification for speaking to her, but, as a matter of fact, it was not a tactful opening. It presumed that she had been foolish, it reflected on her skill, it presupposed a male superiority, and the fact that he knew from where she had started, pointed to unwarranted inquisitiveness. At least, that is how in her present mood she interpreted it. (I think I mentioned that on the previous day she had called *her* caddie a fool.) Her reply was sweetly icy.

"Thank you, I am in no hurry, and can manage quite well." She smiled at him one of those smiles which show a man that he hasn't got an earthly.

"All right," he said. "Only don't get

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too far over this side; it bares at half tide, and the mud is very soft."

"Oh, I know—I was keeping in the shallow to get out of the tide rush. Fib!" The last word, of course, was not spoken aloud. Then the man rested on his oars, and felt for pipe and tobacco to hide his confusion. Brenda rowed straight as a die.

"If I run aground now," she thought, "it will be his fault for telling me I don't know what I'm doing. Officious!"

At the end of another hour her arms ached, her back throbbed, and blisters began to show themselves on her hands. She was hardly a mile nearer her destination. She had had time to think about the man more dispassionately, and decided that, if he had not been so untactful, he might have been exceedingly pleasant and most decidedly helpful.

Then the worst happened. The boat seemed to be difficult to move through the water. She thought it must be because she was getting tired. She rested on her oars for a few minutes, when she noticed that the water continued to travel past. There was no wind astern to make the boat carry way. She must be—— She hastily took in one of the oars to sound with. The blade went down slowly into soft mud, and came out covered in black slime. Yes, she was aground. She stood up and tried to push the boat off, but as it required considerably more effort to pull the oar out than to push, the boat remained quite stationary.

She looked round her in despair, and saw the man was rowing hard towards her again. The sight only increased her determination to get afloat again somehow. As quick as possible she took off her shoes and stockings, and slipped over the side, holding the gunwale firmly in one hand and her skirts in the other. To her horror, she found herself sinking—sinking in the ooze till she had, perforce, to cling to the side of the boat with both hands and scramble aboard again in a very unladylike attitude, plastering the boat and her dress with mud as she did so.

As the man was getting near, she saw that the only dignified way out of the human difficulty was complete capitulation.

"Don't lecture me," she called out to him. "I give you best, and call a committee of ways and means."

"Right you are," he answered. "I'll come alongside and see if anything can be done. I draw less water than you."

Unfortunately, his dinghy struck a hummock when he was ten yards away, and, despite his best efforts, finally stuck firm a few yards nearer.

"I do not know whether you realise that we are here for about five hours," he said. "We cannot walk on the mud here, as it is too sinky, and we could not reach the shore in any case, as there is a deep creek nearer in."

"Do you mean to say that there is really no alternative?" sang Brenda, aghast. "Five hours, and I'm as hungry as a carp now! By the way, I move a vote of thanks for assistance nobly offered."

"I would second it more heartily if I were in a position to make it effective. I deem myself fortunate in having such delightful company in an unpleasant situation, however."

"I think it extremely likely that, before we are afloat again, you will move a fervid amendment to that."

"I wonder," he replied. He said it as though he really did, but his eyes were not only contradictory, but disconcerting. Brenda Trevenna was a girl who would command admiration from a gate-post. To look at her made you wish that Nature had endowed you with all her best gifts, so that you might stand a chance of a scraping equality. Not that her manner was overbearing—just the opposite. It was that she seemed to take you at her valuation, and it was so palpably in excess of what you knew yourself to be, that it only served to humble.

"That was really a rude remark of yours, but I will let it pass." She smiled a message that she knew he had meant it as a compliment. "But to resume the board of inquiry. Surely there must be a way out. Even an amiable companion is not a large asset to place against five hours of cold and hunger. By the way, it is cold now the wind has sprung up. I got warm rowing."

"Oh, I say, how rotten!" he said with concern, hastily taking off his coat. "Here, catch!"

"No," she said, "I won't have it."

"Mark over!" he cried, and threw it.

She had, perforce, to save it from going overboard, but refused to put it on.

"Don't be silly," he said. "It is no good both of us being cold. Besides, you have a very thin blouse on, and I am clad for yachting."

Brenda put the coat on, not because of what was said, but because his mouth was *not* hidden by a moustache.

The donning of the coat was the final

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breakdown of all stiffness between them, and an hour passed very pleasantly.

"I wish we had skis here," said Brenda presently, after discussing the merits of Swiss winter resorts. "I have heard of them being used on the mud with success."

"No such luck," said her companion. "But, by Jove, that has given me an idea! Have you got long bottom boards in your boat? Mine are only gratings."

"Yes."

"Pull out the wedges and push the boards over here."

She did as he requested.

"Do you see the idea?" he asked. "I believe we can stand on one, place the other ahead of us, step on to that, then lift the one behind and place it in front, and thus use them as stepping-stones to get along, If only we can manage to slide the dinghy along with us as far as that little creek there, we can get away."

"It sounds splendid. Let's try; it will be huge sport." Brenda was all alive to be up and doing.

"Throw your anchor over, and then step on to one of the boards, as much in the centre as possible." She did as he requested.

"Now step on to this one." They stood together, close together, because the space was small.

"Now we will try and move the dinghy. Both together! Heave!"

The bottom board sank in considerably with the combined weight and the impulse of this effort, but the dinghy moved a foot.

"Hooray!" said Brenda. "Now, if I move the other board and drop it ahead of us, we can proceed."

She knelt down and reached over for it. It required some considerable amount of persuasion before it became detached from the slime, but then slid along quite easily.

"That will have to be my job," said the man. "The board we are on will require a lot of getting loose. On you go, and I will follow."

They were soon together again on the board ahead; their late support was passed forward, and then they both returned again to the dinghy. This time she slid over the mud quite easily, and they were able to gain two yards.

It proved to be very messy work, and they were both soon thoroughly bespattered with ooze; but slowly and steadily they progressed towards the creek.

"What a splendid thing hard work is!" said Brenda during a "spell" off. "I am as excited and keen over this job as if it were a real game we were playing, instead of a very filthy exit from an unpleasant situation."

"There speaks an Englishwoman," laughed her companion, shaking a lump of mud off his forearm. "It is just because we play games with hard jobs that we run half the world. Besides, there is no joy like creation, whether it be making a pioneer road over untrodden mud or painting a masterpiece."

Brenda looked at him with a new interest. She had seen that he was good to look upon, that he talked and spoke in the "right" manner, and that he possessed a sense of humour. But that he could think as well added a corner-stone to the foundation of a building she had commenced in her heart. In fact, it was the first stone laid after excavation and concreting.

They both worked with a will, both played the game, and they might have been brother and sister for all outward sign there was between them of self-consciousness, yet there was that within them both which said: "This is a day—the beginning of time."

As the creek began to get really near, they worked with redoubled energy and spirits. At last the dinghy was afloat, and they both tumbled aboard with beating hearts and aching arms, but with the thrill of achievement uniting them in a bond of comradeship.

"It will be impossible to get you home yet," said the man. "The tide will not be in for several hours, so I suggest that you come aboard my little yacht, go down the estuary to Brodle, and let your people know where you are. Are they on the 'phone."

"Yes."

"Good—that will be the quickest. By the way, what do you say to a bit of cold chicken, and a cut of home-cured ham, washed down with real coffee?"

"Don't," said Brenda—"it hurts."

"It needn't," he replied. "It's all on my boat, ready and waiting, I expect."

"Where is she?"

"Just round the bend there; you can see the top of her mast."

"Should we be any quicker if I took an oar?"

"No," he laughed. "You sit still. Besides, you might put us aground again."

"I scorn to bite the hand that feeds me, but that was an unsporting remark of yours," she replied.

When they came alongside his yacht, a twelve-ton yawl, Brenda was full of admiration.

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"How gloriously you keep her!" she exclaimed. "I wouldn't mind eating my meals off any part of her."

"You would if my man caught you at it," he commented. "Make a stain on his beloved decks, and neither your sex nor your beauty would save you. Below there, Tom!"

A head suddenly appeared from the fore hatchway, to be followed immediately by the remainder of its attachment.

"Sorry, sir—didn't hear you coming, sir."

"Give the lady a hand."

"'Give the lady a hand, sir?'" The order was repeated and obeyed in one breath.

The cabin was another source of delight to Brenda—it seemed impossible that so small a boat could be so luxuriously fitted.

She was shown into the ladies' cabin aft, and initiated into the mysteries of collapsible washstands.

"You make yourself at home here," said

"They got her to the creek at last."

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her companion. "I will help Tom to fix up the meal."

After a refreshing wash and clean-up, Brenda entered the main cabin, to see a table spread which, in its attention to setting and colour, made an instant appeal to her woman's instincts.

"How beautifully you have arranged everything!" she said. "I am sure this is all a dream."

The man felt amply repaid.

"I hope that, when you wake, you will not let it all be forgotten, as most dreams are."

"No, I don't think it will—some of it was so unpleasant."

"Not the end, I hope."

"I am not awake yet," she retorted, and passed her plate for a second helping of ham.

He was noticeably preoccupied for some few minutes, and, when he spoke, all the flippant fluency had gone from his speech—it was slow and halting.

"I, too, have dreamt," he said—"dreamt often. I see now that my dreams were not the highest of which I am capable. I have dreamed again, but it is so far above me, that dream, I fear I must have been to heaven for a space to conceive it. Do you take milk with your coffee?"

Yes, she took milk. She would have taken water if he had suggested it, for she had seen in his eyes that which told her more than his lips, and, after all, coffee is a small item when souls come to stiles.

The meal over, they repaired to the deck, and Brenda had the joy of feeling a beautiful yacht answer to her slightest touch on the tiller. Its snowy canvas seemed to be the wings of a fairy bird bearing her to some place she knew not where, but joyed to journey to.

They went ashore in the dinghy when they reached Brodle, and Brenda 'phoned her people to send the car for her.

Two hours later she bade good-bye.

As she sped past the hedges, she was shocked to find that she made special note of their parting as the first "good-bye."

The man came to dine with them a week later. He looked very brown against the white of his dress-shirt. Brenda made other mental comments, but that was as good a summing up as any.

After dinner, Brenda was asked to show him the new rose pergola, her father regretting that an infirm knee deprived him of the pleasure.

It was she who gave the twist to their conversation which led to events.

"I dreamt about your boat last night," she said.

"She ought to feel honoured; I am sure her owner does."

"That is kind of him."

"I, too, have been dreaming ever since our last meeting, and I've made a discovery. Do you remember I said I must have been to heaven to get the inspiration for the dream I spoke about."

"Yes," said Brenda, bending to smell a rose bloom.

"It wasn't heaven, after all; it was two bits of blue sky surrounded by dark lashes."

"My eyes are grey," said Brenda, finding difficulty in ascertaining the aroma of the flower.

"Let me see them," he said.

She turned her face to his.

"I can see the hope of heaven in each."

He caught both her hands.

"Mud maiden," he said, "I want to live."

"Rescuer of mud maidens, you seem to be in perfect health."

"It is no use fencing now, dear—I am terribly in earnest."

"Well, what do you want me *to say?*" She was making a big effort to keep control of her voice and herself. "I grant you permission to continue to exist."

"I don't wish to continue existing," he replied, holding her hands still more firmly; "I'm tired of it. I want to live fully and really. There is only one way now, Brenda, and that is you and I together."

"Well," said she, "as you seem to be in a critical condition, I suppose I shall have to consent. Of course, I feel that I am making a——" But she got no farther; she happened to look up into his face, and her speech left her and her courage.

"I'm going to be an idiot and cry," she managed to splutter out, and buried her face in his coat.

"I am beginning to live," said the man, holding her in his arms.

She turned so that she could see him with one eye. There was laughter in it, though it was still wet with tears.

She has cried many times in the same place since, for sorrow, but she can usually soon get one eye free with a laugh in it. That is why they have been so happy.

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ENGLAND'S STORY IN PORTRAIT AND PICTURE.

XXXIV. THE REIGN OF GEORGE III.

1760—1820.

HOW often in English history has a new era seemed to open with a new sovereign, and this not merely when a new dynasty, conspicuous in its difference from its predecessors, ascended the throne. Change is expected, but does not always come. In the past, the accession of Henry II., the accession of Henry VIII., had seemed, to contemporary observers, to predict a new life for the nation. So one reads in writers like William of Newburgh or the gratulatory poems of Thomas More. Yet more obviously was this so, and more naturally, when Charles II. returned to the throne of his martyred father, and Sir Harbottle Grimston, Speaker of the House of Commons, informed him, and the nation, that his sufferings in exile had assured him of eternal salvation and, presumably, the nation of abiding good rule. With George III. there was very much the same feeling abroad. He had been born in England, an advantage which no king had had since James II. He had been brought up by a careful, if not always wise, mother, had learned from good tutors and imbibed good principles.

"GEORGE III. IN HIS CORONATION ROBES."
BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, P.R.A.

For the first time since Charles I. the nation was to have a king whose private morality would bear the closest inspection. His mother truly said that he was "instructed in the general understanding of things," and this included religion, if no great amount of literature. His tastes were all for a country life: men came to call him "Farmer George," and he liked the nickname. In art he was a patron of good painters—Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, and Raeburn were the glory of his reign—and of good music. In letters his recorded judgments do not go beyond his dictum to Dr. Johnson: "Was

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there ever such sad stuff as some parts of Shakespeare?"—which at least shows that he had read the Swan of Avon when he had hardly yet become the fashion. But he was an honest, hard-working man, which is far better for a king than being a judge of books. He was a very obstinate one also, which is rather worse.

When he came to the throne, his chief adviser was his mother's also, John Stewart, Earl of Bute. No one in England yet liked Scotsmen to rule them. Here was the beginning of trouble. In his first speech the king declared that he "gloried in the name of Britain." This was at once mistaken for "the name of Briton," and people thought this to be both an intentional slur on his grandfather—as it was—and also a concession to Scots rather than English feeling. Bute was from the first unpopular, and his unpopularity was reflected on the Princess of Wales. But George began with the personal popularity deserved by his kindly nature. He married, the year after his accession, Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, who was a devoted wife to him and mother of many children. She was a plain little woman, but of a figure which Gainsborough, in his study of her in brown, now at Buckingham Palace, could make interesting, if not beautiful. The family life of the king was a thoroughly "domestic" one. His sons were not all he could wish, and his eldest son, indeed, treated him with scant affection in later years; but he loved all his children deeply, and enjoyed nothing so much as to be surrounded by them, in London, at Windsor, in his frequent visits to great English houses, or to watering-places such as Cheltenham, or at his much-loved Weymouth, where he delighted to live as an ordinary gentleman, tasting the sea air in a comparatively primitive health resort. His last years were clouded by sad affliction, but Queen Charlotte was devoted to him till the end, his daughters never ceased to care for him, and the English people, almost without exception, loved and admired him, and, even when they disagreed with his political action, respected him as a man for the example of religion and morals which he set to the whole nation.

"PRINCESS CHARLOTTE OF MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ LANDING AT HARWICH, 1761, FOR HER MARRIAGE TO GEORGE III." BY W. DODD.

From the first his marked opinions made him enemies among the political party which had been—according to Englishmen's rooted idea of a see-saw in public government—already far too long in power. The king's

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mother had said to him, "George, be a king!" and she and Lord Bute had taught him how to be one on the lines of the able and fascinating theory of benevolent action expounded in Bolingbroke's "Ideal of a Patriot King." Thus he was determined to be above party, for "party government must always end as the government of a faction" — a saying of Bolingbroke's of which time, perhaps, was to show the truth. He set himself to destroy the system of government which Disraeli, eighty years or so later, described as a Venetian oligarchy. George was determined not to be a Doge, surrounded by a strong guard of English despotic dukes, but a king who could both rule and govern. He succeeded very largely in his aim. He sought alliance with the Tories because they had now, for the most part, thrown off Jacobitism, while they held the ideas of monarchy in which he had been brought up. From 1760 to 1770 were years of struggle; from 1770 to 1782 the ministry was practically a Tory one, and again till 1806, and from 1806 till 1830. George had not had Bolingbroke for his teacher in vain.

"CHARLOTTE, QUEEN TO GEORGE III." BY SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS, P.R.A.

The first stroke was to give Bute a place in the ministry. This, and the king's earnest desire for peace, caused the withdrawal of Pitt, who was keen on the continuance of war, that it might destroy the power of Spain, now (1761) united with France in a family compact of Bourbons. And a shrewd French observer, the philosopher Diderot, remarked that his dismissal was a greater gain to France than two victories. He accepted a pension, and five years later a peerage, which made him for the time unpopular; but no one who knew him thought for a moment that he had abated one jot of his principles or faltered in his devotion to his country because Mr. Pitt became Earl of Chatham, and was less poor, but no less incorruptible. Newcastle retired in 1762, and Bute, as chief minister, made the Peace of Paris in 1763, restoring England's natural alliance with France, and obtaining Nova Scotia, Canada, and Cape Breton (Newcastle had not known that "Cape Breton was an island"). Bute was profoundly unpopular, and in 1763 he was forced to resign. George Grenville, Pitt's brother-in-law and brother of Earl Temple, succeeded him, and was nearly as unpopular. He lectured the king till George

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was on the verge of frenzy: he alienated public opinion by prosecuting John Wilkes, a dissolute and ugly wit, who had attacked the king's speech at the opening of Parliament in No. 45 of his paper (yellow, it would be called to-day) *The North Briton*, and, moreover, by failing in the prosecution, through the issue of a "general" warrant and a "search" warrant, which the Chief Justice, Pratt, afterwards Earl of Camden, pronounced illegal. Wilkes got heavy damages. A still greater blot rests on

"THE CORONATION PROCESSION OF GEORGE III., 1761." BY T. WALTER WILSON, R.I.

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Grenville's memory through his mismanagement of the American colonies. The wits said that he lost America because he was the first English minister who troubled to read the despatches from the governors. The Stamp Act, in which he taxed the colonies, worsted, defeated, yet not shamed. The qualities which gave independence to America were the qualities which England herself had produced and nurtured; and when the bitter feelings of the struggle were over, Englishmen came to glory as much as

"THE CORONATION OF GEORGE III., 1761." BY T. STOTHARD, R.A.

was the signal for war. In this great national struggle, from which a new world-power emerged, to rule a large part of the great northern continent across the Atlantic, and soon to exercise enormous influence on the politics of the New World, England was Americans in the memory of George Washington. Briefly must the story be told here. The Stamp Act of 1765 was withdrawn in 1766 by Rockingham's ministry; and Pitt rejoiced in the victory of America, declaring that, as she was not represented in

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Parliament, we had no right to tax her. Edmund Burke, the greatest political philosopher England has yet produced, was strongly in favour of asserting the absolute right to legislate, yet he declared that he did not argue whether it was our right to make a people miserable, he only asserted that it was our interest to make them happy, and that he did not know how "to draw an indictment against a whole people." The colonies had many great leaders, politicians, and soldiers, the alliance of France, and, before long, of Spain, and they had their people united in their cause. England had indifferent generals, no allies, and the ocean to cross, with no steamships, cables, or wireless telegraphy to help her to hold her own so far away. The result, though it seemed long in doubt, was inevitable. On July 4, 1776, the American Congress issued its Declaration of Independence, the first step to changing subjection into a warm alliance which both nations now hope will be immortal.

"CAPTAIN COOK EXPLORING NEW ZEALAND, 1769." BY H. CATON WOODVILLE.

The crises of the war came with Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga, in 1777, and Cornwallis's in 1781. In 1783, by the Treaty of Versailles, England acknowledged the independence of America, and made peace with the Powers which had supported her. The war had been marked by much heroism on both sides, as well as much ill-fortune in the English armies; but these records, on England's side, have begun to fail. Imperishable, however, is the memory of Chatham's last speech, when, in April, 1778, he protested "against the dismemberment of this ancient and most noble monarchy." He had made many fine speeches during the progress of the war, ever on the side of justice and humanity. Now, when England had called loudly for him to return to power, he was too old and broken, and the king too determined not again to admit his domineering spirit to his counsels, for the experiment to be tried.

"THE BATTLE OF BUNKER'S HILL, 1775." BY JOHN TRUMBULL.

Many aged men have attempted to rule England, but the attempt has hardly ever been successful. Chatham's glory belongs to the prime of his life. His last speech, his last appearance, was dramatic, some would say theatrical. He wore black velvet, and was swathed to the knees in flannel: he was led by his young son, his brilliant successor, and, when he entered the House, supported himself on crutches.

"SIGNING THE DECLARATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 1776." BY JOHN TRUMBULL.

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His last words were these, never to be forgotten: "I am not, I confess, well informed of the resources of this kingdom, but I trust it has still sufficient to maintain its just rights. My Lords, any state is better than despair. Let us make one last effort, and, if we must fall, let us fall like men." When the words were uttered, he fell back fainting. He never recovered, and on May 11, 1778, he passed away. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, where a statue preserves his famous attitude, and a waxen image his characteristic expression.

During the years of war, Rockingham's ministry, whose genius was Burke, content with an inferior place; Chatham's (1766–68), unsuccessful from internal dissension and the illness of the great leader; Grafton's (1768–70), a failure, too, for the duke had none of the qualities of the highest public service—all had held office in turn; and the "Letters of Junius," the secret of whose authorship is even now preserved, savagely

WILLIAM PITT, AFTERWARDS EARL OF CHATHAM. BY J. HOPPNER.

satirised and denounced almost all the public men of the day, while Burke's "Causes of the Present Discontents" defended the party system, and severely condemned the continual interference with public and private liberty. Then came the ministry of North, who was First Lord of the Treasury for twelve years (1770–82). He was not unlike Walpole in his aims, though in theory he was more of a Tory than a Whig; but his chief claim to remembrance is that he ruled largely as the king wished, and without giving that wise advice on which every king must ultimately depend.

WILLIAM PITT THE YOUNGER. BY W. [illegible].

He resigned in 1782, and Rockingham again held office for a year. He gave Ireland legislative independence, an experiment which proved a failure, and was ended by the Union in 1800, carried by the younger Pitt. Rockingham died in 1782, and Shelburne, a wise statesman, whom people unfortunately never trusted, a convinced opponent of the party system, took office for a year. He was thrown out by a coalition between North and young Charles James Fox, a man of great charm, wild character, enthusiasm for "liberty," and easy, unselfish ambition. "England," says Disraeli truly, "has never loved coalitions." And this was not an exception. The Duke of Portland was the Prime Minister, Fox and North were Secretaries of State. The Prince of Wales, now grown up into a dissolute, luxurious man, gave to them his support, and to Fox his friendship. But it was not long that this ill-assorted combination held its place. India, under the governor-generalship of Warren Hastings, had become a bright jewel in the

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English diadem, but the administration of its territories, and, still more, the mismanagement and corruption at home, by the East India Company, made Government interference necessary. Fox produced a bill to remedy the disorders. In so doing, it would practically place all power in the hands of the Whig ministry. The king was told by Tories that he would be putting his own crown on the head of Mr. Fox. Thus, by George's personal influence, the bill was thrown out in the House of Lords, and the ministry was dismissed. William Pitt was called to power as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer on December 18, 1783, at the age of twenty-four. "That afternoon," says Lord Rosebery, "his writ was moved amid universal derision. And so commenced a supreme and unbroken ministry of seventeen years."

Pitt proved one of the greatest ministers England has ever had. He was proud and arbitrary, unbending only to a few friends and to children. He was a victim to the vice of the age, drunkenness, brought on, no doubt, by a doctor's regimen of port wine as a tonic in his childhood. He was careless in the outward observance of religion. But beyond this we can say little against him. He was a true patriot; he was unselfish and incorruptible; he was a man of large ideas and steadfast determination; he devoted himself absolutely and without stint to the service of his country. One of his successors has summed up his work in a single sentence: "He ruled during the convulsion of a new birth at the greatest epoch in history since the coming of Christ, and was, on the whole, not unequal to it."

The first years of his power—for he got a majority at the first dissolution of Parliament, a victory both for king and people over the Whig oligarchy—were devoted to economic reform, the foundation of a Sinking Fund, a commercial treaty with France, a better Indian Bill than Fox's, foreign alliances, and the restoration of England's power in the world after the American defeat. England at the time was passing through a great economic change, in the rise of the great manufactures, and the creation of an opulent class which had made its fortune in trade. The story of Bob Smith, the stockinger of Nottingham, is typical. The Prime Minister made him Lord Carington, one of the peers whom he raised to counterbalance, by their wealth, their intelligence, and their practical knowledge of the country's business concerns,

"THE DEATH OF CHATHAM, 1778." BY J. S. COPLEY, R.A.

From the original in the National Gallery.

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the great Whig aristocracy. A wit pinned this squib on the door of the new lord's house—

> Bob Smith lives here.
> Billy Pitt made him a peer,
> And took the pen from behind his ear.

the sincere goodness of the king, the lofty public morals of Pitt, and the devotion to good works, philanthropy, the cause of abolition of slavery, the reform of prisons, and such like, by such men as William Wilberforce, did a great deal to keep the

"THE SETTLEMENT OF SYDNEY, NEW SOUTH WALES, 1770-1788: AN INSPECTION OF SETTLERS."
BY R. CATON WOODVILLE.

England was a good deal affected by the industrial changes of the time, as well as by the ideas that were wrought out over the sea in terrible bloodshed; but the influence of the Wesleyan movement, and the corresponding Evangelical movement in the Church, country quiet, and prevent the outbreak of disturbance while the nation was feeling the terrible strain of prolonged foreign war.

This war began in 1792. From 1789 France had been in the throes of a great revolution. The monarchy which Louis XIV.

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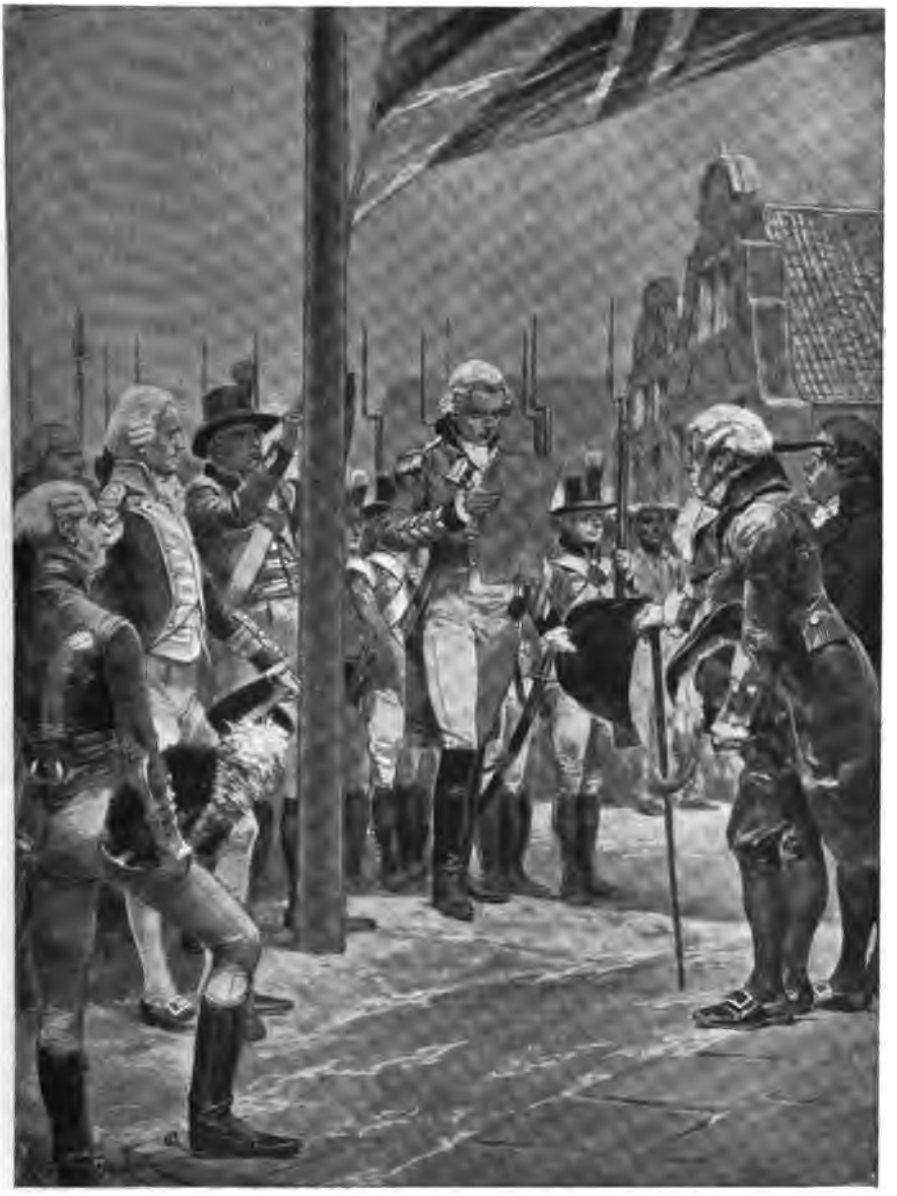
had made so famous, so highly concentrated, and so great a danger to Europe, had become bankrupt and corrupt under his descendants. Louis XVI. tried his best to become a liberal and popular king; Marie Antoinette of Austria, his wife, unintentionally counteracted many of his efforts. The States-General were called; they fell under the control of revolutionaries. The Court fled, but was brought back. Assemblies fell more and more into the hands of demagogues. Finally, king, and then queen, were executed, and France was at war with Austria and Prussia.



"HOISTING THE BRITISH FLAG AT THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE, 1795."
BY R. CATON WOODVILLE.

In England, the party of Charles James Fox had vehemently supported the Revolution, and a number of societies had been formed to imitate or assist it. Burke, who had so warmly supported in America "a revolution

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connected with order," now flung himself into the fray against the disorderly revolution in France, with its "constitutions made by geometers." His letters on the French Revolution and a regicide peace roused thoughtful Englishmen to the danger at their doors. Pitt dismissed the French ambassador when Louis XVI. was executed, and on February 1, 1793, the French Government declared war on England. For eight years attention was concentrated entirely on the desperate European fight, which revealed to the nation two great leaders in Nelson and Wellington.

At first, English troops, under the Duke of York, the son of George III., were defeated, and the English fleet was riddled by mutiny. The battle of Cape St. Vincent, February 14, 1797, was a great victory over the Spanish fleet—now in the French alliance—and that of Camperdown was a defeat of the Dutch; but mutinies at Spithead and the Nore showed in how dangerous a condition was the navy. Both services needed a great leader, and each found one. On August 1, 1798, Horatio Nelson destroyed the French

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.
BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE.

LORD NELSON. BY FRANCIS L. ABBOTT.

fleet at the battle of the Nile, and soon afterwards Napoleon Bonaparte, the young Corsican who commanded the French armies in Egypt, returned to France, and began the ascent to the throne. He had already won a splendid series of victories in Italy (1796): he now (1799) became First Consul, and set up a despotism which soon took the title of Empire. We cannot follow him here in his career of chequered glory; we must mark events rather by the English share in European history. Thus we have the destruction of the Armed Neutrality (of the Northern Powers) against England by the seizure of the Danish fleet by Nelson (under the command of Sir Hyde Parker), at Copenhagen, on April 2, 1801, and then, for a time, the short-lived Peace of Amiens.

Pitt had ceased to be the king's *chief* minister. He had long sought to give political emancipation to Roman Catholics, and the king had refused to assent to his wish. George had already had one attack of insanity; he now had another. His new ministers were under Addington (Lord Sidmouth), a worthy Tory of the dull type. They—and, indeed, almost everybody—wanted a peace with France, and Napoleon

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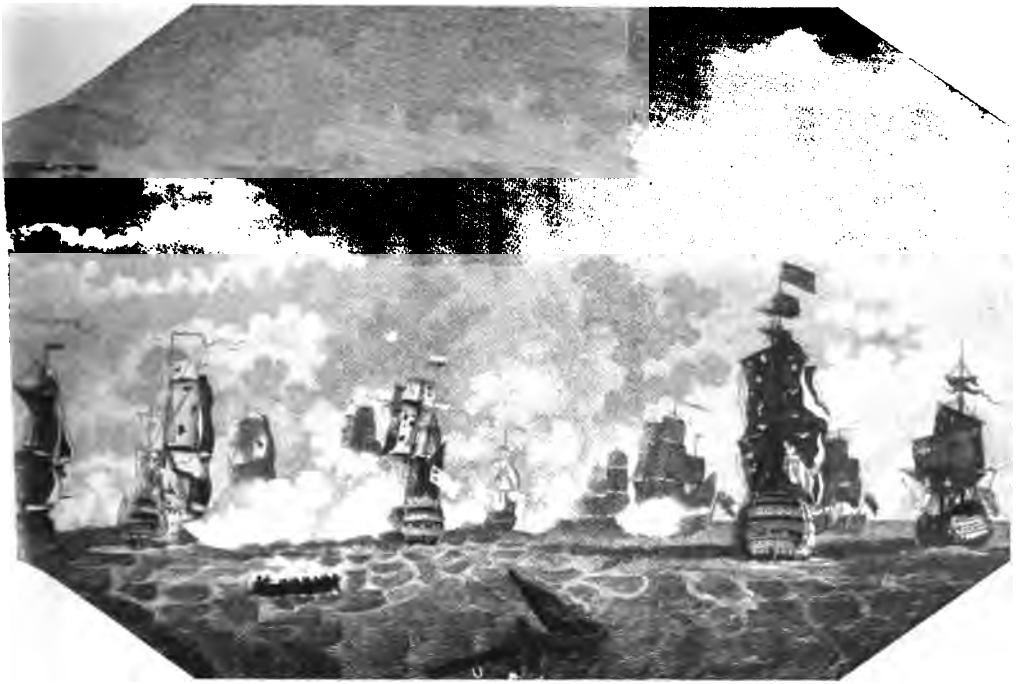

"THE DEFEAT OF THE DUTCH FLEET BY ADMIRAL DUNCAN OFF CAMPERDOWN, 1797." BY G. HARDING.

was not unwilling. The Peace of Amiens, March 25, 1802, was practically a restoration of conquests, except that England retained Trinidad and Ceylon, and there remained a doubtful question in the matter of the right to Malta, which England had captured, and

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"NELSON'S DEFEAT OF THE FRENCH IN THE BATTLE OF THE NILE, 1798." BY G. ARNOLD

which was ordered to be given back to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, the ancient order which had held the island for so long.

But the peace did not endure. The French Emperor was furious at the attacks of English newspapers, at the non-surrender of Malta, and at the careful attitude of England in regard to his continued aggressions. War broke out again in 1803, and it lasted till 1814. From the beginning of the war, England was threatened with invasion: Napoleon assembled a large army and a flotilla at Boulogne. He stirred up rebellion in Ireland, which Pitt had hoped to pacify, after the threatened rebellion of 1798, by the Union of 1800. And all over Europe his armies were winning victory after victory. In 1804, the weakness of Addington's ministry was obvious, and Pitt returned to office. He organised defence along the coast—the *martello* towers on the south are memorials of it—and was himself an active supporter of the volunteer movement. Nelson pursued the French fleet to the West Indies and back. A great coalition was formed against France, while Napoleon won a triumph by the capture of thirty thousand Austrians at Ulm, October, 1805. This was more than reversed by the greatest of English naval victories. On October 21, Nelson destroyed the fleets of France and Spain off Trafalgar. Twenty ships were taken in a struggle hand to hand; but in the supreme hour, Nelson himself was shot down in his flagship, the *Victory*. He lingered a while in pain, made a touching farewell to his officers, and died in the arms of his captain, Hardy.

NAPOLEON I. BY PAUL DELAROCHE.

From the painting after the engraved portrait by Aristide Louis.

In England, seamen have always been popular, but none ever so popular as Nelson. Perhaps his very weakness made him loved, for it was outweighed by his splendid devotion to naval duty. He was easily deceived, easily led away by his affections. But the traditions of his boyhood, his chivalry, his personal kindness, records of his splendid daring, have effaced the memory of what was less worthy in his career, and his famous signal to the fleet, "England expects every man to do his duty," has been happily interpreted as the motto of his own life.

The triumph of Trafalgar had again its counterbalance. On December 2, 1805, Napoleon utterly defeated the Austrians at Austerlitz. It was the signal for the death of Pitt. He had long been ailing, and *only* his spirit had kept him alive. "Roll up the map of Europe," he said, when he heard the news of Austerlitz; "it will not be wanted these ten years." A few days later, on

"THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR, 1805." BY CLARKSON STANFIELD, R.A.

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January 23, 1806, he died, aged only forty-six. He was one of the very greatest ministers England has ever had. Unsurpassed in patriotism as in ready, topical speech or in sarcasm "which tortured to madness," and declared by his friend Wellesley, the splendid Governor-General of India, who rivalled the achievements of Warren Hastings and retrieved the errors of Cornwallis in the East, to be "as complete a master of all English literature as he undoubtedly was of the English language," he was almost as accomplished a classic as Wellesley himself. To

"THE DEATH OF NELSON IN THE COCKPIT OF THE 'VICTORY,' 1805." BY G. DEVIS.

the men of his time he was, in the words of his young friend and disciple, Canning, "the pilot that weathered the storm," and Scott has touchingly recorded the national grief at his death in immortal lines in "Marmion." There also is his great rival, Fox, remembered. He died on September 13, 1807, and the memorials of the two are close to each other in Westminster Abbey.

Fox had been for a short time in office, with the "Ministry of all the Talents," another coalition, under Grenville. It was unable to make peace, and the war continued even when Fox, the Foreign Secretary, had been a lifelong advocate of a French alliance and a *rapprochement* with republican France. The ministry was dismissed after a disagreement with the king on the question of Roman Catholic emancipation, which was more and more becoming the grave political issue of the day. It was succeeded by a Tory cabinet under the Duke of Portland, with Spencer Perceval as Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Canning as Foreign Secretary, and Viscount Castlereagh as Secretary for War. From 1807 to 1812 Perceval was really Prime Minister; in the latter year he was assassinated. Canning, the friend of toleration and Nationalism, quarrelled with Castlereagh, the adviser of adherence to the old ways, the strict monarchist and Tory. But through the years of trouble, England held her own abroad, and the English armies under Wellington won victory after victory in the Spanish Peninsula. There the nation had risen against the rule which Napoleon had imposed upon it, and besought the aid of England, who had already helped to save Portugal from the French. The great battles began with Vimiero, 1808. The retreat of the English to Corunna, 1809,

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"THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO, 1815: THE CUIRASSIERS CHARGING THE HIGHLANDERS." BY FELIX PHILIPPOTEAUX.

From the original in the South Kensington Museum.

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amid terrible privations in winter, and the death of the gallant Sir John Moore, broke the line of success, and the expedition to Walcheren was also a failure. But with the assumption of command by Arthur Wellesley, younger brother of the eminent statesman who had been Governor-General of India, all was changed. The French were defeated at Talavera, 1809; Busasco, 1810; Albuera, 1811; Salamanca, 1812; Vittoria, 1813; and France itself was entered by the British forces. Rough, often brutal, but hardy and indomitable, the British soldier made a reputation in Europe, and the general became renowned in an age of warriors. Wellington was the very reverse of Nelson. Cold, careful, unwearying, inured to hardship, he was by stategical skill and by perseverance the very man to meet Napoleon in the field. But this was not yet to be.

Meanwhile, England was for a short time at war with the United States, owing to the commercial difficulties which arose after English Orders in Council, to meet Napoleon's Berlin decrees, had limited trade with France and restricted the rights of neutrals. A famous sea-fight between the *Chesapeake* and the *Shannon*, and the capture of Washington by the English, marked this singularly unhappy and futile war.

Napoleon's inevitable fall came in 1814, when the Allies forced him back to France and compelled him to surrender. He was sent to Elba, 1814. Europe was at peace. He escaped, and Europe was at once in a blaze. English troops crossed to Belgium, and on June 18, 1815, Wellington won the crowning victory of Waterloo, full of heroic incidents and charged with sad memories for many a British home. Quatre Bras preceded it—a doubtful victory—and between the two battles was the Duchess of Richmond's famous ball at Brussels, immortalised in literature by Byron and Thackeray. Wellington conquered the conqueror of Europe, and England was at the height of her power. The allied sovereigns were entertained in London, and the country seemed to wake to new life after the winter of long war.

The king had now long lost his reason. George, Prince of Wales, was Regent, more splendid and assertive than useful to the nation. There were grave riots and troubles in England, owing to the dislocation of the old industries from the introduction of manufactures, and to the high price of corn, kept up artifically by the Corn Laws. There was much repression, much bitterness; but new life was springing up in the land, none the less, while old things were ready to vanish away.

George III. survived his wife two years, dying on January 29, 1820, having reigned longer than any of his predecessors, and having, through his goodness and patriotism, deserved his people's love.

"THE ENGLISH VICTORY OVER THE DUTCH OFF THE DOGGER BANK, 1781." BY J. F. REITZ.

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THE THREE JEMIMAS.

By W. A. MACKENZIE,

Author of "The Glittering Road," "The Black Butterfly," etc.

I HAD planned to go to the Grindelwald, but three days before my holiday was to begin, I bought a copy of *Household Snippets*, as I was hurrying to my train, and I changed my mind. Please do not think that *Household Snippets* is my regular reading. I wish to insist on the fact that I was in a tremendous hurry, and that I grabbed the first thing to my hand on the bookstall. Well, in that ineffable batter-pudding I found an unexpected plum—an article called "Heaven in the Highlands."

The stuff was atrocious, but I am a Highlander, and that lyric nonsense, spun from the inner consciousness of a Cockney, who had never been farther north than Hampstead, stirred the devil of homesickness that every Celt keeps tied up behind his English accent. So it was me for the heather!

I went a-walking.

No, I went a-swimming.

It took me eleven days to do the uncharted canal from Perth to Dingwall—not the watery width, but the liquid length of it. And where I could not swim I floated.

But at Dingwall the clouds lifted; the long-lost sun, newly laundered and calendered, hinted that hope was not dead; and so, greatly daring, I padded on to Invergordon, a long, empty street, grimly Presbyterian. And still did the sun—cursed traitor—smile.

I would that day to Tain. Two miles out from the ancient and royal burgh—Malcolm Canmore once drank honey wine there — primeval buckets came down — primeval buckets, primeval reservoirs, primeval oceans. And from the overhanging trees of Calrossie Woods, supplementary buckets, reservoirs, oceans, trickled, poured, splashed, dripped, like the father and mother of all the shower-baths that ever were. I thought of the Ancient Mariner, with his "water, water everywhere." I thought of Noah, and sighed for an ark.

And then, over the fail-dyke, over the innocent turf wall, speckled with the washed gold stars of what had been a really royal autumn, an eastward-looking wall flecked with all the tints of an impressionist's palette, loomed and lurched and leered the wicked pagan head, the supercilious, arrogant, mocking head, the Arabian-Desert-Kalgoorlie-Las-Palmas head of a camel.

Not more than twelve inches from my nose was his nose, a snuffy, jelly-like thing; and the contemptuous lip curled, and the chisel teeth gleamed yellow; the vicious eye rolled redly, and the smell of the creature bellied out like a silken sail "in the days of the good Haroun al Raschid."

I stiffened, I froze, I was petrified.

And then, over the afore-mentioned wall, bobbed a cheery, ruddy, bearded face, and a voice in keeping with the face announced—

"Don't you be afeard of Jemima."

The torpedo beard jerked waggishly, a pair of gimlet eyes twinkled, and a right hand went up to the salute.

"Jump the verdant stile, fellow-traveller. Lummy, but they do 'ave some soupy specimens o' weather up in these parts. This is wot you call Scotch 'aggis, ain't it? . . . That my comrade? Didn' you 'ear me inform the 'owlin' elements that it was Jemima? . . . But 'op over, cully, and hang the w'isky dooty, as the natives says. . . . That's my co'ort, that is, an' I'm the giddy Assyrian, though you would'n' think it. . . . Well, 'ere we are, any'ow, nice an' comferable under our bit o' tenting, 13*s.* 9*d.* post free, ett cettrer, see 'Bargains' column. Bedooin tent, I don't think."

Stretched from turf wall to a tree-foot, the tarpaulin promised shelter, if not comfort; anyhow, it prevented the heavy Highland sky squelching us into the sappy bed of the greenwood. So I crept in beside —what was his name?—who, snug as a bug in a rug, cuddled his pipe. And the reek of the plug was as all the airs of Araby in one. He passed me his carrot, and I passed my flask.

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Above the blatter of the rain on the roof rose a dismal sloosh-squash-chump-clump.

"'Ark to my engine a-takin' in water—my Dreadnought, Jemima, my Arab courser. 'Er 'ome's in the desert, 'er 'ome is not 'ere. Sort o' mirac', ain't it, to bump into a 'ump o' the red Sahairey in them stone-faced parts, w'ere they'll be durned if they'll be seeprised—wot? Hoff all the peeled-pertator idiots Nehemiah Plummer's ever crost the bows uv, they're the most double capital chronic. Awsk Jemima."

"My dear friend," said I, "your hospitality is grateful, your plug is perfection, but, if I may make so free, your conversation is a trifle cryptic. I mean—you're aeroplaning. Come down to earth, and—but take another tot."

"There ain't another, fellow-sufferer. . . . Me? Nehemiah Plummer, late A.B., H.M.S. *Insupportable*, 'onourably or otherwise discharged through 'avin' both legs cut off by the Plymouth hexpress w'ile under the inflooence of—we'll call it shandygaff. Me, that is—not the hexpress—an' accordin'ly decorated with the Noble Order of the Double Drumsticks. Be'old!"

He tossed aside the horse-rug that covered his knees, and revealed a pair of wooden stumps.

"Hard luck!" I exclaimed.

"That ain't 'arf, my brother-wanderer, not 'arf." He expectorated reflectively. "Ah, no, for wot's legs if the 'eart is true? I put it to you—wot's legs if the 'eart is true? You understand, I see; but Jemima didn'. Cook, in Southsea, she was an' is, thirty-six bloomin' quid a year, an' 'er Sunday arternoons off. Got 'er little bit with the Postmaster-Gen'ril, too; an' it was all fixed up—the 'ymneal nupshals, I'm speakin' of—w'en I 'ad my misfortun' with the shandygaff. Hoff—*haitch, ho, heff*, hoff! 'You ain't a-goin' to turn me down, Jemima,' I sez, 'because I've got a couple o' chips knocked hoff me? The 'eart hof oak is still sound.' 'No, Nemmy,' she sez, 'you don't come it over me with your potry. The 'ard fact is, I don't see myself pushin' you around in no pram, like you was a babby with a beard, an' the neighbours callin' me Mrs. Timbertoes. No, Nemmy, I won't say as I'm not sorry for you, but that's all the extent o' my feelin's.' That's the palaver she 'ands me, reg'lar ice-cream—wot?—smooth an' sweet, an' cheap, an' cold. Took me in the neck, it did—right w'ere the lady wore the beads . . . . Love 'er still? Me? Not by the breadth o' the Hamoaze, not by——"

"Yet," said I, "it seems to me that if you did not have a hankering after the lady in Southsea, you would not have given her name to the—er—faithful companion of your wanderings."

"Meanin' my swift-foot cutter? Nay, stranger, nay—not out o' love did I so chris'en 'er. W'en I fust see 'er, it was outside a travellin' circus in Maidstone. They 'ad the brokers in, an' was sellin' off the truck. I stopped to see the fun, an' the auctioneer, 'e eyes me, an' 'e sez persuasive: 'Ow much am I bid for this royal navigator o' the desert? Gi' me a price, gen'l'm'n, for this rare specimen o' the camellian tribe. Shall we say twenty pounds for this splendid scion of the bactrian breed?' 'Arf a dollar,' sez I for a lark. Boundin' Beresford, the blighter 'ad 'is eye on me, 'e had, an' afore you could whisper cheese, 'e 'ad my 'arf dollar an' I 'ad Jemima. 'Wot you goin' to do with 'er?' they asks me. 'Dunno,' I sez, 'but you can trust the sailor-man to find use for 'is 'ummin' bird.' I wrassled out 'er destiny that night—that was six months ago. Since then we twa hae paidl't in the burn, as Rabbie says, an' a more contraptious, cross-tempered daughter o' the devil you won't meet from 'ere to 'Ull or 'Alifax. That's w'y I baptised 'er Jemima."

"That was not very chivalrous," said I. "I fear you have grown to be a misogynist."

"If you mean," retorted Mr. Plummer, "that my 'eart's grown 'ard as me'ogany, you're not far off your course. Only teak's more like it. Yes, teak, with a touch 'o fifteen-inch armour plate—nickeled."

"And how do you—excuse my indiscretion—how about living? Do you exhibit?"

"I'm a commercial traveller."

"Indeed?"

"Picture postcards is my lay. I'm sittin' on my stock. If you should be in want o' the crowned 'eads of Europe, or the stars of the stage, I can fit you—'arf sizes kept."

We did a little trade.

By this time bountiful Nature had ceased to pour down her benefits, and I intimated my intention of pursuing my way.

"If you ain't too proud," said Mr. Plummer, "an' I know you ain't, you'll lend a 'and at warpin' me out into the fairway." And he nodded towards the road.

He used the correct expression. I do not know how many inches of rain had fallen since I had sought cover under my cheery comrade's tarpaulin, but the fact could not be gainsaid—the ditches had overflowed, and the road was under at least a foot of water.

Jemima made navigating for Mr. Plummer easy; for me the prospect was ardour-dampening.

"Be not down-'earted," said my friend. 'I'll give you a lift."

"Eh?"

"See this 'ere smack? Wot's she for? She's a freight-carrying coaster, ain't she? Very well. Lend a 'and with the tarpaulin. Thank you. Now, then, Jemima, say your prayers." The animal, after a sound clubbing on the fore-legs, knelt down. Mr. Plummer arranged the tarpaulin to form a wide pad on her back, and buckled it securely. "I get up in front, to keep a good look-out, an' you shin up aft."

"An elderly gentleman stepped out, to have his cap seized between two jaws of iron."

"I could not think of such a thing."

"Then we get under way, an' in the short space o' six minnits we lift the lights o' 'ome—meanin' the 'ouses o' Tain. I put on the brake, an' you slip off over the starn, dry as a jolly's throat o' Sunday mornin'. Easy 's lyin', ain't it?"

The offer was tempting, and Mr. Plummer's reasoning was seductive. I accepted.

Jemima seemed docile. I went so far as to say so.

"Never 'alloo till you're out o' the wood," commented the captain sententiously. And the words were scarcely out of his mouth before I had proof that Jemima shared the faults of most freight-carrying coasters. If her first movements resembled those of a comfortable barge, her succeeding evolutions suggested those of an inebriated switchback afflicted with St. Vitus's dance.

We had got clear of the wood, and had emerged into the straight that leads past Knockbreak to the town, when, with a chromatic siren yell, long and eldritch, throwing up sheer water like loam from a slicing share, a huge travelling motor-car shot by us, cutting into the flood like a monster steel duck.

"Stand by all!" roared Mr. Plummer.

I am not ashamed to say that I clutched my friend round the neck. Peering over his shoulder, I saw Jemima give one wild toss of the head, saw her wrench out of her conductor's hand what he called "the tiller rope," saw her shoot out her neck like a goose's, and felt her begin to "stretch herself" after the car.

"Ain't she a daisy?" said Mr. Plummer between his teeth, as he dug his fingers into her shoulders. "The silly whelp! She's a reg'lar woman—'istrikes every time she smells gasoline. No gettin' down outside the town, brother in affliction. She'll pursue yon alarm-clock to the gates o' doom. An' she'll heat 'em up w'en she cotches em, you'll see!"

In the fractions of time when I thought of anything but my impending decease, I was conscious of trees, cottages, fields, sheep, carts, flying past at vertiginous speed. And then, on a sudden, I was aware that we had houses on both sides of us, and that at open doors heads were peeping out, and then in my humming ears sounded cries of dismay, affright, terror—aye, and obscene laughter.

But Jemima had got her gait. Our ship of the desert had found herself.

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The motor buzzed ahead, we burbled with rage fifty yards behind; the motor shaved corners, we scraped off what it had left; the motor swayed and rolled over the unevenness of the hidden road, we slid and slithered or buckjumped and switchbacked over them, too.

In one swift, wild-eyed gleam I recognised the High Street. I saw crowds give way—it was corn market day—before the car, and then bound up on the elevated pavement when they saw the pursuing Fury, while yells of terror rose behind us and before.

But all things have an end.

The motor drew up at the Royal Hotel. An elderly gentleman stepped out, to have his cap seized between two jaws of iron—a handful of hair went with it—and then, as they say in the romantic novels, I knew no more.

I believe I must have fainted. When I came to, I was in the coffee-room of the hotel, lying on a sofa, and at the table were seated the elderly proprietor of the car and Mr. Plummer, hobnobbing, as thick as thieves, over whiskies and soda.

Before I could take in any more, a young fellow in chauffeur's costume came into the room.

"Well, Watkins?" said the old gentleman.

"If you please, Sir Amyas, what are we to do about spare tyres? That there animal's gone and eaten the two Michelins."

I must have been really badly shaken, for I went off into a fit of hysterical laughter which necessitated medical intervention.

* * * * *

After two years.

"So there you are," said Mr. Plummer, from the giddy height of the dog-cart in which he had driven to meet me. "Thought you'd 'a been a bit seeprised to 'ear from yours obediently. Wonders never ceases, do they? Oo'd 'a thought, yon day, up in the 'appy 'Ighlands, as we'd be a-bowlin' along like my lords, all because hof the multifarious 'appenin's on that tumulchous beanfeast? Wot? 'Im? The Right Honourable Sir Amyas Leigh, Hadmiral o' the Fleet? Oh, 's a corkin' good un, 'e is! Took a sort o' fancy, 'e did, to the cut o' my bowsprit. Tastes differ, don't they? Seems 'e wanted a gate-keeper, an' nothin' would satisfy 'im but me. So 'ere I am in dry-dock for life. 'The Arab's 'ome from the desert wild,' as the potry fellow sez, 'an' his camel cheweth the cud.'"

"'Ere we are! Classy, wot? Hi, Jemima!"

From the low rose-bowered door of what Mr. Plummer called his "kip"—it was truly "classy"—situated just inside the magnificent gates of Leigh Court, emerged she who had been the lady of Southsea, and who was as pretty a little woman as you could find in all the length and breadth of Devon, the county of sweet faces.

"Jemima Number One," said Mr. Plummer concisely. "An' now, if you *will* cast a glance o' your weather optic over the peaceful sward, you will perceive——"

"Jemima!" I cried.

"Number Two," continued Mr. Plummer, "preparing for 'erself a volupshus an' fat ol' age. After a 'ot an' rampageous youth, the calm hof eventide, as the poet sez . . . 'Op down, sir."

I hopped down. But Mr. Plummer had not finished with his surprises.

"If now you'll negotiate your 'ead through that there porthole, the one to stabbord, with the Glory dee John roses, you'll perceive——"

"A baby!" said I.

"Jemima Number Three, an' the pick o' the baskit. Five months ol', an' never waked 'er daddles once. Three teeth, too, an' keeps a 'ole cow busy givin' 'er milk."

"You ought to be a happy man, Mr. Plummer," said I.

"Oh, I ain't complainin'," he admitted. "But let's get in an' 'ave a drop o' shandygaff—let's call it that, my fellow-sufferer."

AUTUMN.

NOW Autumn, like a peasant old,
With little silver, naught of gold,
With careful fingers counts his pence,
His every outlay new offence.
Holding the hours of sunshine fast,
He vows each one shall be the last:
The leaves that make the branches gay
Must dwindle, dwindle day by day,
The light must draw her curtains round,
And leave new shadows on the ground;
If morn be hot, eve must be chill;
And thus he hoards his store until
The wages Summer paid are done,
And Winter's penury begun.

AGNES GROZIER HERBERTSON.

AN IMPORTANT POINT.

GRANDMAMMA: You must not eat your sweets so fast, Robert. There was one little boy who ate his sweets so fast that he died before he could finish them.

ROBERT: What did they do with the sweets he left, grandmamma?

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

THE NEXT PHASE.

By Harold White.

THE returned wanderer looked out upon the chimneys of rural England, as the train crawled towards London. It was during one of the bi-monthly oil strikes. Certain remarks of his fellow-traveller, a stranger, had disturbed him.

"But England is still, at all events, the home of sport?" he asked.

The fellow-traveller laughed reassuringly.

"Oh, we're all right there," he said. "Olympia was packed at two guineas a head to see the nigger box Jacques Batbouche."

"Ah, a good lesson for when they get to fisticuffs themselves," remarked the wanderer.

His companion stared, but continued: "And I don't think you'll often see such a scene of enthusiasm as there was at Epsom when President Guerreros won the Derby. It was a treat to see how the little Brazilian out-jockeyed the Yank at the Corner."

The wanderer felt that his question was hardly answered.

"Is hunting still going strong?" he asked.

"Ah, talking about hunting, there's a capital film of the Marquis de Contarini's Roman fox-hounds at the Policeum," said the stranger.

"But the good old English sports, the games that made England what she was when I left her—cricket—how does cricket go?" persisted the stranger, with growing warmth.

"If you look at your paper," responded the stranger drily, "you will see that Australia made mincemeat of South Africa at Sydney yesterday."

"Of course. I forgot—it's the football season," said the wanderer. By Jove, how we used to love the rough and tumble in the mud!"

His fellow-traveller regarded him curiously.

"Well," he said, "if you want to see how football is played to-day, and how we support the game, you had better watch the thousands trooping up to look at the final of the International Cup to-morrow. It's the Hamburger Hotspurs *v.* the Stade de Vampires Français. I may add that we now call the game 'Fussballspiel'—I did not at first know what you meant."

"But don't English people *play* football—don't they play anything?"

"Not when we can afford to pay others to play for us," proudly replied the stranger. "I believe a few of the old brigade do still play golf," he added, with an indulgent chuckle, as he picked up his *Sporting Era*.

The soldiers protecting the strikers from the public came into view upon the terminus platform. The wanderer hastily descended, and was heard to inquire for the next boat train.

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NO PEACE.

"WHY did you leave your last place?"

"Well, mum, the master and missis was always quarrelling."

"What! Always?"

"Yes'm. When it wasn't me an' 'er, it was me an' 'im!"

THE PUPPY AND THE SNAIL.

"You're a most peculiar creature," said a puppy to a snail,
"So far as I can ascertain, you haven't any tail.

"Of all the silly stay-at-homes, you're silliest of the pack,
To carry—when you *do* go out—your kennel on your back."

"My tail," the sapient snail replied, "I do not leave about
For every fool to tread upon, each prying pup to snout.

"My tail is where it ought to be—I do not wag, but turn it—
Nor do I poke what nose I have in things that don't concern it.

"My kennel, as you choose to call my shell, is just the hub
Of all my little world—my home, church, chapel, kennel-club.

"And though 'tis true I don't go out, I am not on the shelf;
I give 'At Homes' the livelong day, and give them to myself.

"And yet, though blameless joys like these engage my lighter mood,
To serious thought I oft incline: I don my hermit hood,

"And thus, retired within my cell, fast closed the outer door,
Contemplate past and future, and molluscan sins deplore.

"That even of me all snails shall say: 'Though gone where none shall find him,
Our brother's bright example leaves *a shining track behind him!*'"

Coulson Kernahan.

THINGS PEOPLE DON'T SAY.

"I COULD have been here punctually, but I really didn't care."

"Let me interrupt the conversation a few minutes with one of my pointless anecdotes."

"Don't excuse my handwriting. It is never better than in this instance, and generally worse."

"I expected you, Mr. Jones. I have been upstairs dressing for the past two hours."

"My answer to your proposal of marriage, Alfred, is YES. It took you long enough to come to the point, I must say."

"This weather is better than last year's."

"These were not the best seats I could get. I had an attack of stinginess when I got to the box-office."

"I am glad you are going, Mr. Boresum. Come and see us as seldom as you can."

PROOF POSITIVE.

UNCLE: Well, Johnnie, my boy, I hope you got plenty of marks this term?

JOHNNIE: Oh, rather! Some of them still hurt!

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PAMELA HOUSE-HUNTS.

By Charles Marriage.

PAMELA has been looking over houses. We are not leaving our present one, but she does it regularly every few months. I never can quite make out why, but she says it's for economy. Also, I notice, all women like looking at things they are not going to buy. "You see, Dick," she says, "if we lived in a house where we could keep one servant less, we might have another car."

But I have never been able to see it. It is only women who think it economical to save fifty pounds in order to spend three hundred.

"The house I went over this morning," she said to me at dinner the other day, "was being done up by the landlord. One of the painters showed me over it. I much prefer them to caretakers. At any rate, they don't have their hair in curlers, and they hardly ever show you the library, where they're all sleeping temporarily, full of beds and children, as the caretakers do.

"Well, there was a hideous, full-blooded crimson paper all over the room I should make the drawing-room—when I'd had the paper off—and it was evidently the joy of the painter's heart. In his own mind he had decided that that was the dining-room, and he simply wouldn't allow me to have my own opinion about it. When I asked him why I shouldn't use the room as a drawing-room, he said: 'Why, mum, wot would you do for yer dining-room, then? 'Ow could you eat in a room wot 'adn't got a red paper? Why, it *is* the dining-room!' And nothing that I could say would make him budge an inch. Isn't it funny, Dick? I suppose some people *always* have crimson walls in their dining-rooms. Then he took me downstairs to see the kitchen, and he wouldn't let me look at anything but a frightful black line, about an inch thick, that he was painting all along the top of a khaki-coloured dado. It didn't really matter one way or the other. It was quite unnecessary, and nobody would ever look at it, but he seemed to think it was the landlord's *pièce de résistance*.

"'Don't you judge too 'ard on the 'ouse, mum,' he said, 'till you've seen this 'ere wall when I've finished putting the black line round. It'll be the making of the place, you take my word for it.'

"'All the same, the paper's peeling off the wall over there,' I said. 'It looks as if it were rather damp down here.'

"'Not it,' he said. 'You'll find that'll come all right when you've lived in the 'ouse a week or two; and when this 'ere line's the whole way round the room, and not just begun, like it is over there, you won't know

THE KINDRED ARTS.

CHATTY ARTIST: I am never happy unless I am drawing.
MODEL: My father was like that, sir.
CHATTY ARTIST: Oh, what was he?
MODEL: 'E kept "The Pig an' Whistle," sir.

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the room. Puts a bit of a finish on it, a thing like that.'

"'Well,' I said, 'speaking personally—but I may be wrong—I don't see that anybody's going to notice it one way or the other, except that it makes the room a little more gloomy.'

"He laughed as if he were a real master of some art, listening to a child talking about it.

"'You don't understand, mum,' he said. 'I've been at that there line for the last day and a 'arf. Some o' these 'ere landlords, they wouldn't think of a thing like that; but this one, 'e's a real one for making a thorough job of a thing, 'e is. A bit of a finish like that—why, it's all the difference between a lady's 'ouse, and fit to live in, and one o' these 'ere jerry-built affairs, as you might say, what you 'ave practically to rebuild when you've lived in 'em a couple of weeks. No, you mark my words. Come again in a day or two, just to give me time to finish it and let it dry, and see if you don't see what I mean. Why, you couldn't 'elp it! A lady doesn't understand these things like we do, what's been brought up to it, as you might say, from child'ood—well, 'ow should she? But you look in again in a couple o' days, and you won't know the room for the same place."

"He went on lots more like that, long after you would have thought he had said everything ...uld about it.

"'I can't say I'm surprised at it myself. For one thing, you ain't 'ad the experience wot we've 'ad—'ow should you? We knows wot these 'ere things are goin' ter look like from the first, and we can tell if they're worth doin' or not. But you can take it from me, mum, I shouldn't be tellin' you if I didn't know.

"'Now, don't you take a prejudice against the 'ouse till I've finished this job o' mine. It's the makin' o' the thing. A thin line like that all round—why, it makes a different sort o' kitchen to the ordinary at once. You'll see when it's finished. Take my word for it. Things ain't like what they used ter be in the matter o' decoratin' 'ouses, mum. Time was when they wouldn't 'ave set no store on a thing like this. But nowadays art they will 'ave, and art they gets,' he ended up, as he started painting his line again.

"He really was awful fun to listen to, Dick. I wish you'd been there. All the same, house-hunting's very tiring. I think I'll just tell the agents to stop sending me any more addresses for the present."

"I did that before dinner, through the telephone," I said.

"Dick, I wish you wouldn't treat me like a baby. All the same, I'm rather glad you've done it." And then, as an after-thought: "Supposing we do a little motoring this week-end, shall we?"

INJUDICIOUS.

PROPRIETOR OF NEW PAPER: Not at all a bad first number. There's one thing about it I don't like, though.

EDITOR: What's that?

PROPRIETOR: This letter on page six, signed "Old Subscriber."

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"BUSHRANGERS." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

A scene from real life on the St. Kilda Road, a short distance from Melbourne, in the year 1852. The story is told in the accompanying article on the artist's work and career. From the original in the collection of C. B. Crawshaw, Esq., owner of the copyright.

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"THE BOY SAMUEL AMID THE OFFERINGS AT THE TABERNACLE." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.
From the original in the collection of W. W. Clark, Esq.

THE ART OF MR. WILLIAM STRUTT.

BY AUSTIN CHESTER.

THE work of Mr. William Strutt, R.B.A., falls naturally into several classes; for, as subjects, the religious, the historic, the classic, the domestic, the animal, and the humorous have each in turn appealed to him, his sympathies having made him eminently versatile in choice of theme.

Ruskin wrote that "of all the wastes of time and sense that modernism has invented, none are so ridiculous as our endeavour to represent past history." Such a pronouncement, limiting the field of art to actual visual representation, would close the door against much imaginative work. Had the greatest artists held this view, we should be without the religious pictures of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Rubens, all those works that have affinity with Hellenism, and painters would have restricted themselves each to the subject-matter of his own time. We should thus have no such work as Monticelli's "Star of Bethlehem," nor would Leonardo have fixed for all time the outward type which represents Christ to our minds.

Should we need to quote authority to put Ruskin in the wrong when he asserted it to be "ridiculous waste of time and sense" to "endeavour to represent past history," we can advance the spoken words of the greatest giant of English art, Sir Joshua Reynolds, who said that, in choice of subject, the painter should select one of general interest—"either some eminent instance of heroic action or heroic suffering. There must be something either in the action or in the object in which men are universally concerned, and which powerfully strikes upon the public sympathy . . . There are events and characters that may be sufficiently general for all our purposes . . . Such, too, are the capital subjects of Scripture history, which, besides their general notoriety, become venerable by their connection with our religion." Having in the words of Sir Joshua found full justification for the catholicity in choice of subject followed by Mr. Strutt, we turn to the story of his career.

In contemplating the artistic life-work of a man, it is customary to seek as keynote,

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in some forbear, the explication of his talent, and in this way make of it a transmitted rather than a personal gift. We like, as it were, to edit one man's work by making

elevates prosaic objects into things of beauty, and enables them to live

By admiration, hope, and love,

we are still at fault as to its original creation

"THE FIRST SIGHT OF THE CROSS: IN HOC SIGNO VINCES." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

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an ancestor indirectly responsible for it. Yet even should we find, as now and again we do, the lives of father and grandfather to have been pervaded by the quality which

In the tree of the ancient family of Strutt, of Terling, Essex, art appears to have been a foreign graft, which first showed itself in 1749, in one of its branches, in the person

"PEACE: A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

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of Joseph Strutt, of "Sports and Pastimes" fame, the first gold medallist of the Royal Academy, and the grandfather of the subject of our article.

With Joseph Strutt, artistry thus entered into the family. It descended to his son, Thomas Strutt, the well-known miniature-

to art. He recalls, with a tolerant smile for his early efforts, the thousand clattering hopes that beguiled or urged him to endeavour to make of himself a painter, to do ultimately such good work as to force others to say that he has justified his choice of career. In talk he will trace the stages

"THE LOST SHEEP." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

painter, was by him transmitted to his son William, who, in his turn, sees it equally developed in his son, Alfred W. Strutt, whose pictures are known to thousands through the popularity of their reproductions in black and white.

From the very beginning, from the first dawn of intelligence, William Strutt inclined towards blossom of his talent from its primary germ, and tell how not even his ardent wish to learn the craft of paint outstripped his parents' desire to further this ambition. He says: "In my early boyhood, passed at Boulogne-sur-Mer, I was placed by my mother with a French tutor. Looking out of the window of his study one day, I

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"THE ROMAN CENTURIONS MENTIONED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE ACCOUNT OF THE CRUCIFIXION." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

By an imaginative interpretation of St. Matthew's phrase, "the centurion and they that were with him, watching Jesus," the artist here represents three Roman soldiers of centurion rank to illustrate the three slightly varying accounts of this moment in the Gospels of St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke. Mr. Strutt's idea was to typify Faith, Hope, and Charity in these three figures of the men who, though of an alien race and religion, testified "Truly this was the Son of God!" This picture is reproduced by permission of William Mackay, Esq., owner of the original and of the copyright.

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saw the funeral procession of a poor fisherman pass by, the picturesqueness of which struck my young mind so visibly that, by aid of pencil and paper, I tried to represent the solemn train." This may be taken as Mr. Strutt's first essay in pictorial composition. The second attempt, still at Boulogne, was when, his education then being continued at home, he "began to show a feeling for animals—went in for the delineation of a galloping horse, which occupied in its presentment the whole floor of a vacant bedroom. The print-shops of Boulogne had some very interesting works exhibited in their windows, and some of these I used to try to commit to memory, then, running home as fast as my small legs would allow, I carried home my eye-acquired treasure of line, and worked hard to reproduce it, in a measure, on paper." Circumstances bringing the family to London, the boy then began to sketch "the statues in the squares in Pall Mall and at Charing Cross, where my juvenile efforts, in my passion for drawing, were frustrated by the roughs crowding round me, when I took refuge in the yard of Somerset House, where Bacon's fine statue of Father Thames was my subject. But single figures were not so much to my taste, for racing scenes occupied my growing ambition. I remember, however, that I designed at this time a 'Flight into Egypt,' in which a

"THE BRITISH LION AND HIS STURDY CUBS." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

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"FISH, FLESH, AND FOWL." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

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daring attempt to get congruity was highly amusing." France again became the family's place of sojourn, Calais this time, whence a move was made back to Boulogne. Here the lucky accident of an encounter with an artist of considerable discrimination led to his advice, "Send him to Paris," being taken, and, as Mr. Strutt expresses it, "Off we went to the beautiful city, where I was soon working hard with my noble professor, M. Drolling, peintre d'histoire et Membre de l'Institut de France."

The Paris of 1830–1840 was, we must remember, the then chosen field of art

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progress. Ingres was painting with amazing industry, and his authority was immense, for he worked with a devotion "which resembled that of religion." De la Croix, who never sat down to paint without making some sketch from Raphael or the antique, was astonishing the world by his bizarre power; Delaroche, one of the most accomplished exponents of the eclectic modern school, was at work in the hemicycle of the lecture theatre of the École des Beaux Arts, and influencing the youth with whom he came in contact by his personality and by his opinions even more than by his work. Descamps was painting religious and historical subjects with Levantine brilliancy and colour. Diaz, Rousseau, Troyon, Dupré, Gerome, and a host of brilliant men were working in the realms of romantic and naturalistic art with that feverish enthusiasm which made of them, as Gautier said, "*Les vaillants de cette grande generation de* 1830."

"A PRIMROSE LEAGUE." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

It was into this atmosphere of determined progress that Mr. Strutt, then an impressionable boy, was precipitated. The gallery of the Louvre was his Mecca and constant place of study, and here it was that he acquired his intimate knowledge of the several varying schools to which the so-called Old Masters belong—a knowledge the intimacy of which few save art experts possess: here that he acquired the almost worship of Raphael, who, as he insists, "was, is, and will be the greatest painter of all time. His Loggie was what my master used to give me to copy of a night."

Whilst his general outlook was in this way being widened, the actual progress of technique, carefulness of form, and searching for beauty of line was progressing under the immediate eye of M. Drolling, who stood high in the estimation of those who know the value of good teaching, and whose singular power of appreciativeness, equable temperament, and indomitable patience were each qualities to further his reputation as an instructor.

The end of the 'forties brought Mr. Strutt's student days to a finish. He loitered in Paris, however, working hard the while at illustrations for Mrs. Jameson's "Sacred and Legendary Art," and for Ferdinand Sere's "Moyen Âge de la Renaissance." The *minute* drawing entailed—for we must remember that, at the time of which we are writing,

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"THE LION'S SHARE." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

the uses of photography in the reductions of line was uncontemplated—affected Mr. Strutt's sight, and to so great an extent that it was a grave question whether he would not altogether have to relinquish the pursuit of art. Possibly the fear of having to give up a profession which claimed all his allegiance aggravated the local derangement of nerves, but, whether or not this were so, the threatened ill was great enough to persuade him to try an outdoor life.

He sailed for Australia in 1850, bent upon trying his luck at the gold diggings at Ballarat. By the time his voyage was accomplished, his health and sight were quite restored, and the relinquishment of the spade and shovel, and the resumption of the pencil and brush, were a foregone

"TO THE RESCUE!" BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

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"THE CANTERBURY PILGRIMS." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.
From the original in the collection of William Willans, Esq.

conclusion. It was, however, the graver's etching tools rather than the brush with which Mr. Strutt was at first employed, for his able draughtsmanship easily found him employment.

He was at work on a lithographic stone at Melbourne, when, some twenty miles distant, there occurred what was probably one of the most devastating bush-fires ever known, of which the date is remembered to-day as Black Thursday. It ravaged an area of fifty miles. The dust and darkness and heat were so great, even in the city, that its inhabitants thought the end of the world was at hand. Many thousands of animals perished, mercifully but few human beings. Mr. Strutt traversed the track of the fire, when it had subsided, and made a great number of sketches of the scene; these he afterwards incorporated in a painting of remarkable vitality and power, expending upon it the incessant labour of three years. It was exhibited in London, where it attracted great attention, thence was transferred to the Crystal Palace, where it obtained a gold medal, an honour repeated at Adelaide, for it toured the whole Australian continent, and now, having been purchased for a private collection, holds in it an honoured place.

An almost equally interesting picture to "Black Thursday" is Mr. Strutt's "Burial of Burke," now on view in Melbourne—a picture which should certainly be added to one of Australia's public galleries, since to Robert O'Hara Burke—and the men with him, Wills and King—belongs the feat of being the first Englishmen to cross the Australian continent. The enterprise, great in its achievement, disastrous in its termination, was one with which the world rang in 1862. Mr. Strutt got all his details for this historical picture from the head of the relief party which found Burke's remains and interred them. The portraits of the men concerned were all taken from life, and this large and important historical work, after fifty years of contemplation and preparation, has only recently been completed.

Enticed by descriptions of the beauty of the country, Mr. Strutt, accompanied by his young wife and child, left Australia, after some three years' residence there, for New Zealand. Here, under the shadow of its highest mountain, Mount Egmont, and in the heart of most beautiful scenery, he bought land and built himself a home with his own hands.

An interesting incident of great archæological value is attached to Mr. Strutt's short

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"GOLDEN PIPPINS." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

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sojourn in New Zealand. He was walking through the forest one day, when his foot, sinking deep into the dead leaf-mould, struck upon a hard, unyielding substance, which, unearthed, proved to be a club carved out of a lump of lava from the crater of Mount Egmont. The only thing of its kind which illustrates the early occupation of the island, it is now in the keeping of the British Museum.

In New Zealand, however, Mr. Strutt made no long sojourn, for the melancholy of his surroundings, the desolation of the forest, and the paucity of human companionship drove him citywards again. He returned to Melbourne, where, known as the father of the art colony, the pioneer of culture, and the first trained painter, he soon gathered round him other men of like aims. He founded the first art society there, got up its first exhibitions, and was soon sought out by Australia's prominent men both to paint portraits and to teach. In 1862 he came back to England, and has now for many years been established in his beautiful home at Wadhurst, in Sussex.

Mr. Strutt's Australian pictures number "Bushrangers," "The Little Wanderers," the famous "Black Thursday," and "The Burial of Robert O'Hara Burke"—to which we have already alluded—a fine portrait of John Pasco Fawkner, the founder of Melbourne, another of General Sir Edward McArthur, and yet another of Robert O'Hara Burke.

In New Zealand he painted an important picture of "Maoris Driving Off Settlers' Cattle." At the time of his stay in the island the first Maori War was brooding. Mr. Strutt, however, appears to have got on remarkably well with the natives, who later were so resentful at the occupation of their lands by the white people, for he not only made friends amongst them, but was permitted to make many a sketch, and his picture "Pomari and His Family," which included a godchild of Queen Victoria, is a record of the relations established between him and them.

STUDY FOR "BALAAM AND THE ANGEL." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

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"SPRING CLEANING." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

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Of the pictures which were the outcome of Mr. Strutt's Australian sojourn, one of the most interesting, as representing a phase of the life of the Colony now, happily, a thing of the past, is "Bushrangers," exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1887. The episode which it represents occurred on the St. Kilda Road, only a short distance from Melbourne, in October, 1852. Mr. Strutt was then residing about a mile from the scene of the outrage. In the full daylight of early afternoon, a number of travellers were held up and robbed by bushrangers. A man was placed over the captives, who were tied together in groups of two and three, with strict orders to fire upon them if a hand was stirred, the ringleader exclaiming: "Put them all together, so that, if you miss one, you will kill another." In this position they remained for some two hours and a half, during which time seven other travellers were held up and added to the first sufferers, being secured in like manner. At sundown the bushrangers, apparently satisfied with their plunder, drew off the man acting as guard, and shortly afterwards was heard the sound of horses galloping off through the bush in the direction of South Yarra. The prisoners were then at last able to set themselves free and proceed on their way.

Photo by] *[Cousens, Tunbridge Wells.*

MR. WILLIAM STRUTT, R.B.A., F.Z.S.

The deeply religious feeling which permeates Mr. Strutt's life has influenced his vision and impelled him to give at least a tithe of the substance of his talent to sacred themes—

Turning his talents to his Maker's praise.

His more important pictures are thus religious ones, and chief amongst these stand his "Centurions of Scripture," which illustrates the passages in three of the Gospels, St. Matthew xxvii. 54, St. Mark xv. 39, and St. Luke xxiii. 47, each of which gives its separate version of the same event—of how the centurion and they that were with him, seeing the earthquake and those things that were done at the time of the Crucifixion, hearing Christ cry out, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" in the darkness which came over the land, feared greatly and glorified God, saying, according to St. Mark: "Truly this man was the Son of God." The accident of making the remarkable discovery of a portrait of a Roman centurion at Colchester gave Mr. Strutt the exact model of the costume which the military officers who commanded a century, or company of infantry consisting of one hundred men, wore at that time. Many and detailed are the studies of helmets, togas, sandals, belts, arms, and costumes generally which Mr. Strutt made for the purposes of historical accuracy in the details of this picture.

Other religious pictures by Mr. Strutt are "No Cross, No Crown," "The Temptation in the Wilderness," dealing with a moment in that period when Christ was driven by the Spirit into the region of Quarantania, in the Desert of Jericho, to wrestle victoriously with those mysterious temptations of which we have no record beyond the account given by Him to His disciples. Here, probably as the symbol of strength to which Christ in Revelations v. was likened, where He is called the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Mr. Strutt depicts these majestic beasts, as, awed by divinity, they stand apart and watch, together with other creatures of the wild suggested by the line in the familiar Lenten hymn which speaks of "prowling beasts about Thy way." Further Bible themes are "The First Sight of the Cross: In hoc signo vinces," a presentment of the Holy Child with His foot upon the shoulder of the ass where the cross is marked; "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head"—a subject taken from St. Luke ix., and giving great scope for the exercise of imaginative qualities; "Jesus Wept," in which the face of the Saviour is

"THE SOMNAMBULIST." BY WILLIAM STRUTT.

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shrouded in the shadow of the hair, and thus the full mystery of this moment of human weakness and emotion is treated with due reverence; "The Shadow of the Cross," in which the hands of Christ, which rest upon the crook balanced upon the shoulders, reveal a naturalness of attitude which removes a stereotyped idea from any semblance of theatricality; "Hosannah!" "Jerusalem Pilgrims," "Behold, I Stand at the Door and Knock," "Be Thou Faithful Unto Death," "The Holy Family," "The Lost Sheep," and "The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem."

Among a smaller group of Old Testament themes one may notice "The Childhood of Samuel," and "David's First Victory," and the artist's greatly popular rendering of the famous prophecy of Peace in the Book of Isaiah ending with the words "A Little Child Shall Lead Them."

It was Mr. Strutt's interest in African subjects that first led him into the field of animal-painting. "The Dying Monarch," "A Halt in the Desert," "The Soudanese Cub-Hunter," "The King's Highway," "Sentinels of Empire," and "The Lion's Share," these all show his sympathy not only with the king of beasts, but with animals in their natural surroundings. From his historical themes we may mention his "Lady Godiva About to Ride Through the Streets of Coventry"—about which we must note the archæological truth of the buildings within which he has placed his subject—"The Canterbury Pilgrims" of Chaucer's description, "One of Rupert's Lambs," and his two pictures of John Bunyan.

A large picture, exhibited in the Gallery of British Artists, of "Achilles Dragging Hector Round the Walls of Troy," is the outcome of Mr. Strutt's love of classical mythology.

In an age not given overmuch to spirituality and imagination, this work of Mr. Strutt is a notable example of both qualities, and of a character tender, simple, and sincere. The blazon of the idealist is indeed upon so much that, turning over the contents of his portfolios and noting the peculiar faculty he has of translating all he hears or reads or thinks into line, we find his attitude comparable in a way with that of William Blake, for often there is a hint of the unseen and of the mystic in his drawings.

We come upon one sketch of a dying man to whom Satan is showing the roll of his misdeeds, and another of Satan writing his own memoirs, and yet another of Time proceeding at a great rate and drawing in his skeins youths and maidens, old men and children, figures typical of majesty and penury, pagans and Christians, the miser and the prodigal. There is a mass of carefully-executed sketches which might well be used to illustrate a classical dictionary—Ulysses, Polyphemus, Penelope, Actæon, Adonis, Alcestes, Bacchus and Bacchantes, Jason, Jupiter, Ceres, Diomede, the whole wonderful galaxy is gathered there. And not only could his drawings be used to advantage in classical myth and history, but there are designs that could be as suitably employed to illustrate Holy Writ, such as the one of Balaam and the ass, into which a very cleverly drawn figure of the angel is introduced, and, from the New Testament, "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes"—each the product of a fanciful imagination, which justifies the saying that "what we like determines what we are."

Before we close our record of a life of unremitting industry, we must refer to that long list of subjects which shows, and potently, not only uncommon versatility in the painter, but that he is a man of broad sympathy and of a geniality which is able to express itself in paint in the style in which other humorists have expressed themselves in words.

Heading this list of broad comedy subjects, we place "Fish, Flesh, and Fowl," but Mr. Strutt's kindly, amused outlook upon life is equally marked in "Religion Never Was Designed to Make Our Pleasures Less," and in the many other pictures contributed to this special field, which he shares in prowess with Mr. Dendy Sadler.

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CARFEW IS ADVISED.

By EDGAR WALLACE,

Author of "Sanders of the River," "Private Selby," "The Council of Justice," etc.

ARFEW was young and he was rich.

That is to say, he had more money than he had ever had before, and any man who has more money than he ever had before is rich, whether the sum be five pounds or fifty thousand pounds.

Carfew had a little office in the City. He had no business, but he had an office.

Carfew once made money—not much, from the point of view of Lord Kullug, but, oh, so much from Carfew's standpoint!

He increased that little fortune of his, and learnt something that was worth learning at the same time and in quite an unexpected manner.

Carfew, who was spending a holiday in the country, saved the life of Lord Kullug's daughter.

This is romantic, and I am very sorry, but it couldn't be helped. Lord Kullug's daughter was punting in the little river which runs through the home park, and Carfew, sitting on the bank, with his back to a board which informed him that "Trespassers will be shot by order," or words to that effect, was idly watching her.

She was a slim, pretty girl, but not Carfew's kind. So he was telling himself when her punt came abreast of him, and she stopped poling to eye him severely.

"I say," she said, "what are you doing in our park?"

He rose and took off his hat.

"I beg your pardon?" he said.

"What are you doing in our park? This is private land."

"I was sitting down," said Carfew.

"But you mustn't sit down in our park," said the girl petulantly. "My papa is Lord Kullug, and you will be prosecuted."

"It seems a very inadequate reason," said Carfew very calmly.

"You are not an artist, are you?" she asked suddenly. "My papa does not allow artists in our park."

"I am not an artist," said Carfew impressively—"I am a gentleman."

He thought she looked dubiously at him, and was nettled.

"You ought to go away," she said; "we don't want strangers in our park."

Carfew sighed wearily.

"Can't you think of something else to say?" he asked. "This 'our park-ing' of yours is getting on my nerves. I never turn people out of my park."

She was ready to be annoyed with him, but curiosity and interest got the better of her.

"Have you got a park?" she asked.

"Yes," said Carfew carelessly, "I have several—Regent's Park, Hyde Park, Battersea Park——"

The girl uttered an exclamation of annoyance, stooped to pick up her pole, overbalanced, and fell into the stream.

She gave a little scream, but picked herself up and began to wade ashore.

"Isn't it any deeper than that?" asked Carfew from the bank.

"Go away, you wretched man!" she snapped.

"Because," said Carfew, "if it isn't, I'm coming in to rescue you."

And, with no more ado, he stepped boldly into the water.

It was by no means a simple task, the rescue of Lord Kullug's daughter, for the bottom of the stream was full of little holes and pitfalls, and she was glad to have the assistance of this blatant young man.

Twice he made a false step, and went up to his neck in water, and when at length he reached the bank, he was pardonably indignant.

"You told me it wasn't deep," he said reproachfully. "I might have lost my life. Really, for a person who owns a park, you are very inconsiderate."

"If you hadn't bothered me, I shouldn't have fallen in," she said, and she was very angry.

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"If I hadn't been here when you had fallen in," he replied gravely, "I shudder to think what might have happened to you."

All the way to the big house he talked to her, telling her of the danger she had escaped, describing similar accidents which had occurred to friends of his—they were all people of eminent position, and most of them were great public characters—until the girl began to believe that she had indeed escaped deadly peril, and that she had figured in the adventure of her life. He praised her coolness in the moment of danger, and compared it with the panic into which Lady Bagford fell when she was thrown into the sea off Cowes from Carfew's yacht.

"She gave me twenty times the trouble you gave me," said Carfew reminiscently, "and I assure you there was no more danger than if she had fallen into my private swimming bath at Blenheim House."

Carfew was a good talker, and in the half-mile walk he brought about a revolution in the girl's opinion of him and his conduct. In the end, she forgot that he was a trespasser, and that his outrageous conduct had provoked the accident. If she did not forget, she certainly did not tell her father.

Carfew was taken to a room, clothing of approximate fit was found for him, and he was invited to stay to dinner.

"I cannot tell you how greatly obliged to you I am," said Lord Kullug.

He was a tall, gaunt man, hard-featured, and with an eye which chilled. Carfew, having carried matters so far, wisely declined the invitation to dinner.

"Come and see me in the City one day, and lunch with me," said his lordship. "All that you tell me about my daughter's —er—courage, is very pleasing to me. She comes of—er—a good stock."

Carfew smiled sympathetically.

"That I know," he said.

He knew the Kullugs to be what they were. Old George Kullug had been a storekeeper in Kimberley in the early days of the diamond fields. He had made money and had evaded the law. He left two millions to his middle-aged son, who had added considerably to his inheritance.

Carfew went back to London elated, for this adventure was one after his own heart. He was a rescue specialist. Once, on the Thames Embankment, he had rescued from death an elderly colonel of Engineers—at least, he had told him to "look out" at the approach of a taxicab—and that colonel of Engineers had laid the foundation of Carfew's fortune.

He went back to Blenheim House—which is situated in Bloomsbury Square, and for the use of one room in which lordly establishment he paid twenty shillings a week—whistling a little tune. He was still whistling when he turned on the tap of his private swimming bath, to the intense annoyance of the medical student who occupied the chamber next to the bathroom.

Three days later Carfew presented himself at 843, Lombard Street, which is the London office of the Manhattan Deeps, Manhattan Deeps being a most prosperous Johannesburg gold mine, of which Lord Kullug was chairman and board of directors.

Carfew had looked up the concern in "The Stock Exchange Year-Book," and had duly noted that the directors' fees were one thousand pounds per annum.

"He'll probably make me a director," he thought, "and give me the necessary stock to qualify."

There were other and kindred concerns—the Weits Consolidated Goldfields, Limited, the Licker Deeps, Limited, the Turfontein Associated Claims, Limited, the Johannesburg District Lands Syndicate, Limited—all having offices under the same roof, and Carfew, working out possibilities with the aid of a pencil and the "Year-Book" aforesaid, computed the maximum benefits which might accrue to him as being in the neighbourhood of five thousand pounds a year.

"Not bad," said Carfew complacently, and wrote a little note to Lord Kullug, telling him he would call.

Lord Kullug's secretary replied that he regretted his lordship would be out of town on Tuesday, and would Thursday suit Mr. Canfam? Which annoyed the young man very much, because his name was not Canfam, though, as he signed it, it looked very much like it.

He sat down and wrote to the secretary in reply—

"DEAR SIR,—I am directed by Mr. Felix Carfew to thank you for your letter of even date. In reply, Mr. Carfew asks me to say that though he was leaving town for his country place at Harrogate on Thursday, he will put off his journey till the following day, and will be pleased to call on Lord Kullug at the hour named."

He signed the letter "Adolphus Brown," and dispatched it with the comforting sense of having held up his end.

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Punctually to the minute he arrived at the Lombard Street office. He would have come in a hired electric brougham, but, having surveyed the office on the evening previous, he decided that it was very unlikely that Lord Kullug's private office would be in the front of the building, and less likely that his lordship would witness his arrival, even if the office were so situated, for, as Carfew knew, millionaires did not spend their days looking out of windows.

He was ushered to a reception-room, and, after a reasonable period of waiting, a uniformed attendant led him along a carpeted corridor, tapped respectfully on a rosewood door, and showed the young man into a room which contained a map, a square of carpet, a big desk, an easy-chair, and Lord Kullug.

The millionaire removed his glasses and nodded to Carfew.

"Sit down, Mr.—er——"

Carfew refused to help him.

"Mr. Carfew, eh? Well, I'm sorry I could not see you before."

He looked at his watch.

"A little too early for lunch. Now, just tell me something about yourself. I am under an obligation to you, and I should like to be of some service to you."

This was the kind of talk Carfew wanted to hear. And he told Lord Kullug something about himself.

He related things and hinted at others.

He inferred that he—Carfew—was the type of man no great corporation could afford to be without. He suggested that the one idea that obsessed the important City houses was to secure his services on the board of directors. He spoke airily of contracts he had secured, concessions he had obtained.

"Let's go to lunch," said Lord Kullug.

They drove in his car to the Savoy.

Carfew pointed out, in a subtle way, the enormous advantage of youth. He hinted that he could influence the Press to an extraordinary degree, but had never yet had occasion to do so. He admitted that he held no directorships, because he had fought shy of anything but the best companies, besides which he did not care for industrial concerns.

"Here we are," said his lordship.

A table had been reserved for them, and when the choice of the wine had been made, Carfew continued.

"I'm rather at a loose end just now," he confessed. "A young man with money, energy, and initiative, who achieves some distinction in a quiet way, is inclined to let himself go to rust, if opportunity does not offer itself. As I was saying to the German Ambassador some time ago—we were travelling together——"

(The conversation in question took place when Carfew, a very young and confident reporter, forced his way into his Excellency's state cabin and bullied him into giving an interview.)

Of course, Carfew explained, he did not wish to take advantage of so small a service as saving his lordship's daughter. After all, there was very little danger to himself, he added modestly, though at one time he had thought it was all over.

Carfew talked and talked, and the more readily he talked, the more readily did his host accept the position of audience.

He interrupted Carfew once to ask him what capital he had. Carfew said he had exactly fifty per cent. more than he possessed.

At the end of the lunch Lord Kullug found an opportunity.

"You're an interesting young man," he said, "and you should go far. I can help you."

Carfew murmured his appreciation.

"I have a considerable experience of the world," his lordship went on, "especially of the financial world, and I can put you in the way of a fortune."

"That," said Carfew with dignity, "is the road I am looking for."

"I could, of course," Kullug continued, "give you a directorship, but I haven't one to spare."

Carfew's hopes fell from 100° Fahr. to the place where you mustn't shake the mercury for fear it breaks.

"I give you instead"—he paused, and Carfew's hopes took the elevator to the fourth floor—"a little good advice."

The elevator rope broke, and Carfew found himself in the basement, alive but dazed.

This precious advice was not forthcoming until Carfew and the millionaire were outside the building, and the door of the luxurious automobile had been opened for the peer to enter.

"You can make a fortune," said his lordship, "if you let the other fellow do the talking. Good afternoon."

Ten minutes later Carfew was walking slowly in the direction of Bloomsbury, repeating the formula at every few steps.

He went to his room, removed his shoes, divested himself of his splendid raiment, and lay on the bed, thinking very hard. He went down to dinner in the same subdued mood.

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At the end of the meal he leant across the table and said to the young medical student who sat *vis-à-vis*—

"Do you want to make a fortune?"

The student growled wicked words at him.

"But do you?" persisted Carfew.

"Of course I do," said the other.

"Well," said Carfew, drawing a long breath, "let the other fellow do the talking. Good evening."

He went to bed that night to some extent mollified. He was not easily snubbed. People who boasted that they had snubbed Carfew were either untruthful or mistaken. But he had been snubbed, and it had been done with a thoroughness which left him no conceit.

He came down to breakfast next morning still digesting his lesson There was a letter on his table, and the flap bore a crest.

"A rabbit rampant eating a carrot couchant," said Carfew disrespectfully. "I wonder if it is from——".

It was, and written in Lord Kullug's own hand. Would Carfew call at eleven?

Carfew called, and Lord Kullug rose to meet him.

"I sent for you, Carfew," he said, with a grim little smile, "because I am afraid I did not make it clear to you that I know exactly what part you played in the rescue of my daughter."

Carfew said nothing. He shrugged his shoulders in self-deprecation.

"And I rather admired your audacity," his lordship went on. "Moreover, in the advice I have given you, I think you were more than repaid for the ducking you got. But there is one thing I did not ask you, and which I feel sure that you will not mind telling me. Exactly why did you seek an introduction to me?"

Carfew smiled, and the millionaire's lips twitched responsively. Carfew did not tell him that, in trespassing in the home park, he had no more idea that it was the property of Lord Kullug than he had that Lord Kullug was anything but a name.

"Look here, Carfew"—his lordship swung himself round in his chair and faced the young man—"we are both business men. Let us put our cards on the table. I think you will find it worth your while."

"Perhaps that would be wise," said Carfew, after a little pause.

"D'ye know," continued the elder man, "it never occurred to me till I was on my way home last night. I was chuckling over the snubbing I had given you, and, if you will pardon me, your discomfiture. I thought—you'll forgive the plain speaking—that you were a bumptious youth, pushful, arrogant, and a little—er—boastful."

Carfew smiled again and shook his head, a little reproachful, a little amused.

"Yes—yes, but let me finish," continued the millionaire. "I was thinking this when the thought occurred to me—have Sieglemanns sent him?"

As he said this, he leant forward and scrutinised the young man closely.

Carfew dropped his eyes for a moment.

"H'm!" he said.

"Sieglemanns *did* send you!" exclaimed his lordship. "They sent you to find *out* about the Turkish loan."

He burst into a fit of laughter and leant back in his chair.

"And I saw through it," he said at last. Then, banteringly: "Well, Mr. Carfew, what did you discover? Are we going to float it? What shall we issue it at? And what do we get out of it?"

He gazed at Carfew with amusement and with the air of benevolence which is peculiar to the don who propounds a problem to which he only can offer a solution.

Carfew was silent. Then he rose.

"I am afraid it will not interest you, Lord Kullug," he said, "to learn what I have discovered."

A look of alarm came into the other man's eyes.

"What have you discovered?" he asked sharply.

Carfew shrugged his shoulders.

"Nothing," he said, and smiled meaningly.

He took his departure, leaving his lordship in some perturbation of mind.

In the street Carfew bought an evening paper, but failed to discover any reference to the new Turkish loan. He went to the nearest Tube bookstall and purchased all the current financial journals, and studied them on his way back to Bloomsbury.

Only one had any reference to the matter.

"The uncertainty regarding the issue of the new Turkish loan," it said, "is affecting the tone of the Paris Bourse. A rumour is gaining currency that the French houses will not be invited to issue, and that it will be placed in the hands of one of the big London houses. Paris is without definite information on the subject, and, until there is an official declaration, French investors naturally display reluctance in reinvesting."

"Oh!" said Carfew.

He had only the vaguest idea as to what

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it was all about, or exactly in what manner so ridiculously a minor point as the country in which a Turkish loan would be issued could affect the peace and happiness of Lord Kullug.

He could have been there a quarter of an hour before the appointed time, but he thought better to arrive after the hour.

"His lordship swung himself round in his chair and faced the young man."

He found a wire waiting for him at Blenheim House—

"Call and see me at five o'clock, 104, Berkeley Square.—Kullug."

He presented himself at the house five minutes late.

Lord Kullug, pacing the polished floor of his library, was a little impatient.

"You ought to keep your appointments to the minute, young man," he said. "Sit down. Will you have a cup of tea?"

Carfew shook his head.

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"I have just come from the Ritz," he said simply.

"Seen Sieglemann?" demanded the other sharply.

Carfew smiled.

"No," he said truthfully, "I have seen nobody but my doctor."

He had bumped into the medical student in the hall of Blenheim House, and, remembering the unpleasant things young Æsculapius had said, Carfew's description was a very kindly one.

"Now," said his lordship, "I want to know definitely what you have discovered."

"Nothing," said Carfew firmly.

"Did my foolish daughter say anything to you?"

Carfew shook his head. His lips were tight pressed as though to guard against an unwitting admission.

"I know no more than"—he paused, weighing his words—"than the Bourse suspects."

It was very bold of Carfew, and he was in a momentary panic lest he had said too much.

"Indeed?" said the millionaire grimly. "You know that, do you? I was right—I was right!" he muttered, and shook his head threateningly.

"When did you find out?"

Carfew hesitated.

"I know nothing more," he said slowly, "than I knew after lunch yesterday."

"After lunch yesterday?" repeated the other. "After you lunched with me, you mean?"

"Exactly," said Carfew.

They eyed each other as the matador and the bull eye one another before the final *coup*.

"But I said very little," protested his lordship, speaking half to himself; "you did all the talking."

Carfew did not speak then.

"When do you make your report to Sieglemanus?" demanded Kullug.

"I may not make it," responded Carfew.

The millionaire sat nibbling the end of an ivory paper-knife.

"I can pay, and pay well, for information," he said at last. "If you know anything worth knowing, you can sell your report to me."

Carfew again hesitated, but the millionaire opened his desk, and, taking out a cheque-book, wrote with some deliberation therein. He tore out the slip and handed it to the other.

"I have made it payable to bearer," he said.

Carfew took the form, placed it in his pocket, without haste took up his hat.

"The report?" asked his lordship.

Carfew smiled.

"I have forgotten—everything," he said.

Lord Kullug nodded.

"That is right—you will go far, my friend. And remember," he said, as they shook hands before parting, "the little piece of advice I gave you at the Savoy was meant in earnest. Let the other fellow do the talking."

"I shall never forget that," said Carfew with some emotion.

LEAVES.

ON the dry brown bough
The withered leaves still cling
In their last desperate hold
And ceaseless murmuring.

They push the swinging branch
To beat upon the pane;
"Save us," they whispering cry—
"We shall not live again!"

She laughs in pretty play,
The child beside my chair,
"Look at the linden tree!
The leaves are dancing there,

Are swaying on the branch,
Are singing in their glee;
The little song I hear
Is, 'I am glad to be.'"

What grief within my breast
Beats to the tapping call?
Deep in my heart I hear
The rustling of their fall.

DORA SIGERSON SHORTER.

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THE SAFE.

By EDWARD F. SPENCE.

MONSIEUR ALCIDE GROSTET was proud of having risen from the ranks; he often said so, but added, with a smile, that it was "the upper ranks" from which he had risen. The joke was trifling, yet it served the worthy man very well, and, to be just, he had no other. This idea of his connection with the upper ranks was merely based on a legend that the basket in which, at a very early stage of his career, he was left at the door of a charitable institution, contained a handkerchief which had a small coronet embroidered upon it. His friends, behind his back, uncharitably suggested that the handkerchief might have been stolen by his real parents, a point which will never be cleared up. This belief in an aristocratic origin in no way affected the fortunes of Alcide, who really bothered his head very little about the matter, and was content to rest his right to exist upon his personal merit, which was not inconsiderable. For by the time when he purchased the Hotel of the Three Kings—which was the Carlton, Cecil, and Savoy combined of the little watering-place St. Laurent-les-Bains—he had reached an excellent position without any extravagant help of Fortune, but chiefly by means of his industry and talent for the profession adopted by him.

There is no need to trace him through his career—from the days when he was a kind of extra boy in the kitchen of a transpontine Parisian *gargote* to the time when he was an awe-inspiring waiter at the last of the great restaurants. Industry, civility, and intelligent study of his business had caused his success, aided, no doubt, by the excellence of his character, for he was sober and strictly honest—according to the canons of his profession. In the matter of honesty, he was not *plus royaliste que le roi*, but he had rigid limits beyond which he never passed. To give a certain proportion of non-current money in change, to make little mistakes in the bill, and to get the better of the landlord on every occasion, he deemed permissible; yet he would not have stolen a pin even if a big pearl had been attached to it, and whilst he was not too honest to cheat in the reckoning, the coins in the coat of a guest were scrupulously respected by him.

In fact, he had rather a fine point of honour, for even if willing to pass upon a customer a big percentage of out-of-date or out-of-place coin, he would have drawn the line at giving him any piece of money which might be called an *article de Paris*. Of course, he had made money by smuggling matches and selling bad French cigars at exorbitant prices to strangers by pretending that they were clandestinely imported weeds from Havana—a pretence which involved a delicious little comedy of mystification. At the age of forty he had amassed quite a little fortune, and was living frugally but in comfort with Blondine, otherwise the charming Madame Grostet.

The purchase of the Hotel of the Three Kings was a tremendous plunge. He did not even discuss the matter with the bright-eyed Blondine, for he made the bargain with a customer of the restaurant the moment he heard that the hotel was for sale. Of course, he was not buying a fish in the sea, since he had acted as *maître d'hôtel* at the house during several seasons, when people came to take the dirty, foul-smelling waters that were supposed to enable them to overeat themselves for ten months in the year without suffering permanently from the natural consequences of their greed. Still, it was a fearful plunge, for the purchase took every penny of his capital, and, even in order to complete the installations, he was compelled to borrow some thousands of francs.

During the first year of his management he thrived. Blondine showed unexpected qualities, and the whole of France could not have produced two better managers. The cooking was good, the service swift, everything was clean, and the wines, from the *ordinaire* which figured as *vin compris*, to the *vins de luxe* in cobweb-covered bottles, carried solemnly on little wickerwork coffins, were excellent. The prices showed the hand of a

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master. All the intelligence and experience of the couple were brought to bear upon the question which guests ought to be fleeced and which treated tenderly. Those who seemed likely to come again were agreeably surprised by their bills; those unlikely to pay a second visit were certain not to do so after a fierce interview with Madame concerning the gross overcharges; and the foreign birds of passage, who merely stayed at the hotel in order to see the famous ruins, wrote indignant letters to *The Times*, which got tired of publishing them. Madame showed a shrewdness in helping him to form opinions on the subject which amazed him; at times she seemed inspired.

During the first season enough was earned to pay off the debt and provide sufficient funds to build a new wing. The second season opened brilliantly, and then disaster came suddenly. A Franco-South-American millionaire gourmand, treated tenderly the first season because likely to come again, did pay a second visit, and brought the plague with him and died of it. A fearful mischance caused the truth to leak out, though everybody connected with the hotel, and also the whole municipality, did real collar-work in order to conceal it. The guests took wing, the little town was deserted, and Alcide and Blondine were left desolate. He was quite unequal to the occasion, but the pretty little woman with bright eyes showed plenty of pluck, and vainly tried to stir him up to action. "It was no good," he said, "to take proceedings in Uruguay for damages against the heirs of the dead Franco-South-American gourmand, and useless to advertise the hotel abroad."

"You must beat the big drum," she answered.

But he replied sadly: "If I beat the biggest drum in the world with the largest stick on earth, people will not run the risk of plague. Cook, and other magnates of that kind, would keep them away."

For a fortnight he remained inactive and shed many tears, whilst watching the expensive operations for disinfecting the new wing, in which the gourmand died, and poor Blondine could not induce him to take any decided step. At last he determined to cancel all his contracts as well as he could, and close the hotel for the season, though it was doubtful whether they could scrape through till the next, by which time the scare might have subsided.

The work of his lifetime seemed to have gone, and he wrote to a casino hotel at a fashionable *station balnéaire* to offer the services of himself and Madame as *maître d'hôtel* and *caissière*. "I have risen from the ranks," he said, "and now we go back again. Alcide is no longer master of his destiny, but the servant of the destiny of others."

The night the letter was posted, Alcide, by mere force of habit, went into the hall at the time the arrival of the hotel omnibus was due. He expected it to be empty, as usual, but, to his amazement, saw many boxes on the top and a lady inside. Five minutes later he and Blondine were engaged in a sharp battle with a courier of their acquaintance, who was demanding an excessive commission on the bill of the wealthy American widow who had come to stay at the house for the night because there had been a breakdown on the railway. "She is rich," said the courier, "as rich as the Rothschilds, and spends money as if francs hung on currant bushes. Give her a big suite of rooms, a big dinner, hundreds of candles, and charge what you please. I will see that she pays it." The percentage that he demanded was so great that, under ordinary circumstances, Alcide would have kicked him out of the house in an outburst of virtuous indignation.

At about half-past nine in the evening, Monsieur Alcide was summoned to the *salon* to see Mrs. Henry Van Basken, whom he found a middle-aged faded blonde, very much overdressed.

"I wish," she said "to consult you about the courier. Do you know him?"

"Not in the least, madame," replied the cautious Alcide, unwilling to commit himself. "But surely madame is acquainted with him, and had references?"

"No," she answered. "My man got run over by a motor-car at Avignon, and I had to take this fellow on the recommendation of a mere hotel-keeper."

"Madame," replied Alcide haughtily, "I am a hotel-keeper."

"Oh, that's all right; I didn't mean to hurt your feelings. But somehow I distrust the courier; I don't like the look of him, and the matter is important."

"Important?"

"Yes. You see, I'm carrying some of my jewels about with me—about a million francs' worth of jewellery—and I fancy that my maid, who is a fool, has told him so. The fellow has an evil eye. I don't wish to lose them, and still less to have him cut my throat to simplify his task."

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"Perhaps you will allow me to remark, madame, that if you keep them in your own room, and they are taken, I am not responsible."

"Well, I have always been accustomed to sleep with some under my pillow, and the rest at the foot of the bed, under the clothes, and I don't care to trust them to anyone."

"As madame pleases. I do not wish to take responsibility, since I should be liable if I took charge of them and anything were to happen."

"Say, if you do take charge of them, where would you put them? Have you any kind of safe?"

"My predecessor, madame, had a wonderful safe built into the wall, of quite extraordinary strength, for we are accustomed to rich guests who leave things in our custody."

The widow got up briskly and said: "I'll come and have a look at that safe." And she followed Alcide to his sanctum.

"It's here," he said with a lofty air, "but you cannot find it."

He smiled, hauled a bunch of keys out of his pocket, opened a big writing-desk, walked quietly to the door by which she had entered, suddenly popped his head out to see if anyone watched, then closed it. He moved to the opposite side of the room, did something which Mrs. Van Basken could not see exactly to a piece of the wood panelling, then went to a corner of the room, and, stooping down, applied a key apparently to the bottom of the wall. He returned to the panel and pushed aside a rose forming part of the moulding, and Mrs. Van Basken saw a big keyhole. The hotel-keeper, after using two keys in succession, gave a heavy pull; a door came open slowly, and the lady gazed at a kind of hole in the wall and blackness beyond. With an air of pride, M. Alcide Grostet said—

"You'll hardly find so strong a safe anywhere else in this country. Look at the bolts."

She examined the door carefully, and was surprised to find how powerfully made it was.

"That will do," she said. "I see no flies on that. Wait half a minute. But, say, what is that door there? Can't the safe be got at through the wall?"

"Indeed, no, madame. The safe has thick steel walls, and that door is locked now; it leads to the—the new wing."

"Where the man died of the plague?"

Monsieur Grostet shrugged his shoulders.

"A cruel catastrophe, madame; but the place has been thoroughly disinfected, and there is no danger. It was done most carefully, at terrible expense. But who told you?"

"All right," she replied; "never mind who told me. I'm not afraid. I'll be back in a minute." She walked out.

A little later she returned with three rather large boxes covered with green leather, which she put into the safe with her own hands. Alcide closed the door.

"Now," said Mrs. Van Basken, "kindly hand me the keys."

He walked to the safe and began to open it.

"I say, what are you doing?" she asked.

"I am going to give you back your jewellery. You will take care of it yourself. These are *my* keys, the safe is mine, and the responsibility would be mine if the jewellery were left in the safe; but it will not be left in the safe unless the keys are left in my pocket. You may be surprised to learn, madame, that a French hotel-keeper has a sense of honour. It may be otherwise in your country."

She shrugged her shoulders and went out.

An hour later, yielding to the pressure of Blondine, Alcide had opened the safe, smiling at the thought of Blondine's disappointment when she found the cases locked. She took them out, put them on the table, and shook them a little. The man still smiled.

"Wait a minute," said the little woman with bright eyes, and she vanished.

Alcide wondered and wondered. Back she came, her piquant face aglow, and one of her hands behind her back.

"What is it?" he asked.

She put the other hand behind her back, and something jangled.

"Which hand will you have?" she asked.

"Both," he replied, "and your heart."

In one of her hands was a bunch of skeleton keys. There was a rather long pause, then Blondine said uneasily—

"Oh, they have been very useful. That's how I have been able to give you a good deal of information about our clients, and advice as to the way to treat them. You see," she continued, hesitating a little, "when I was with—him, I had to help." The "him" was the husband who had died rotting in a penal settlement. He had been quite a "swell cracksman." Alcide and Blondine rarely spoke of him, and never used his name, merely talking of "him" and "he."

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"I did not know," said the hotel-keeper, "that you had ever worked with him."

"Never exactly with him, but sometimes for him. I was a good wife, if a bad woman so far as honesty is concerned in money matters."

The man was silent, oppressed by the thoughts of that past which he had forced himself almost to ignore. She took one of the boxes, worked at it for a minute or two, then raised the lid slightly and shut it down.

"No, I won't open them one by one, but all at once."

The second was an easy task, the third difficult, and took about ten minutes; but she triumphed, and then flung them all open at once, and uttered a cry—a curious cry of delight, envy, admiration, and greed. Glittering and glistening fiercely in the light were amazing jewels. She took out tray after tray feverishly, with trembling hands, till the table was covered by the gorgeous gewgaws.

"Heavens," she said, "I hardly thought there were so many lovely things in the world! A million francs, did she say? Why, there must be two or three times that!" And as she gazed, her cheeks reddened, and her bright, pretty eyes shone as never before, and seemed to be vying with the gleam of the stones.

Alcide sat still, looking rather pale. She took up necklaces of diamonds and pearls, and put them round her pretty throat, thrust a huge tiara on her soft golden hair, crowded bracelet and bracelet upon her round wrists till she could hardly raise her forearms, pinned brooch after brooch on her bosom, and even then, though she seemed one huge glitter, the trays were only half empty. She bowed to herself in the glass, and suddenly put her arms round the man's neck, saying—

"Kiss me—kiss me! Did you ever kiss a woman with such jewellery? Come, come, you were a good-looking fellow—did none of the fine ladies in your restaurant wear such jewels and kiss you?"

He put her off almost roughly. The stones pressing against him seemed to burn.

"This is nonsense," he exclaimed—"silly child's play! Here are we hardly hoping to escape bankruptcy—what's the use of playing with those things? I can't give you jewels—not even paste. Perhaps 'he' did!" And he spoke sharply.

"No, no, don't take it like that. I have been happy with you, and I love you, and I hated him and the life with him. But, oh, it's something for once to wear these wonderful things! And to think they are only to deck that ugly old woman!"

The phrase was hardly fair to Mrs. Van Basken, who still was able to look quite handsome in her war-paint and a discreet light.

"Come," she said, "don't let us think about troubles; let's think we are awfully rich people, and you have given me all these things. And, of course, if we were, you would stand me a big supper. Wait a moment." And she danced out of the room.

Alcide sat still, his face in his hands, his eyes fixed on the rest of the treasure. Soon he heard her footsteps. She was walking slowly, holding up with her little hands her skirt, which she had made into a kind of gigantic bag.

"Take the things out," she said. And he found a yard of bread, a bowl of butter, a cold chicken, a big *pâté de foie gras*, and two bottles of Georges Goulet.

"Good Heavens," he said, "this is madness! What—a Hummel and the best champagne? Why, this is ruin for beggars!"

"The best," she answered, "is barely good enough for us to-night, and you can charge the champagne to her."

"To her?" he answered, laughing. "She is American, and only drinks water."

"Then add to the price of the rooms, or candles, or something."

The man seemed almost hypnotised. He quickly arranged the things on the writing-desk, and opened a bottle of champagne, remembering suddenly that he felt strangely hungry. They drank and ate, he silent and she bubbling with light talk. At last there was a pause, and she cried—

"Long live the Americans who don't drink wine! And look," she continued, "at the champagne; it's like liquid diamonds. Watch the bubbles jump up and down like little flecks of gleaming light."

He put aside his glass.

"That's enough, that's enough! I'm out of mood, and it's all no use."

"Long live honesty, which brings ruin!" she cried. "Long live bankruptcy, the goal of honest people! Here are we with millions before us, and bankruptcy staring us in the face!"

The man shuddered, and a pause came upon them, broken when she bade him open the other bottle, and he refused.

"One bottle," she persisted, "is the most foolish thing in the world. It's as bad as a man without a sweetheart or a woman without a lover."

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"You've had as much as is good for you," he answered, "and I as much as I can take of this heady wine."

"I shall open it myself," she said, "and spill half of it, I dare say."

So Alcide Grostet opened the other bottle and drank a glass.

"Put them away!" he suddenly cried. "They're the eyes of devils tempting me! I'm an honest man; I have always been an honest man. I have risen from the ranks—the upper ranks. Now I'm going down to the lower ranks; but I'll fight it out like a man. Put them away!"

She laughed and took a bracelet with a big ruby from one of the trays.

"Do you see that—that drop of blood, worth more than the earnings of half your life—that drop of blood, to win which hundreds of men would shed gallons of human blood? Look at it, look at it!" And she thrust it close to his face, on which it seemed to reflect a glow, for his cheeks flushed. They suddenly paled again; drops of sweat gathered on his forehead. She began to sing, in a little moaning, crooning way, a song about love and life. He poured himself out another glass, but set it down untasted.

"Put them away," he said, and his voice was weak. She uttered something in a low voice that caused him to shudder and answer in a whisper. Then they heard a noise outside the door, and he jumped up and snatched the bread knife.

"It was only the cat," she said, laughing; and she put her arms round him, and they whispered and whispered. After a while he rose and took down the railway guide.

"Nonsense," she said, "you goose! We shouldn't have a rabbit's chance of getting away now. Listen! You must pretend that I have run away, and you must hide me here. Then, in a week or so, when the hue and cry is over, and they think I have escaped, a lad with short hair dyed black, with darkened skin, will take the train and the boat. Do you think I'll make a pretty lad? And the lad will wait till you can get away and join him, and then—and then—— Long live the American woman who only drinks water!"

"But where can I hide you?"

"There's the new wing," she said; "that's shut up. Nobody goes there, and they will never suppose that I was so clever as not to run away."

His throat was dry, and he was raising the untasted glass of champagne to his lips, but she stopped his hand.

"You must not; you have had enough for a sober man."

"I was a sober man till those cursed stones intoxicated me; I was an honest man till those devils' eyes drove me mad. But the new wing—what about the risk of infection?"

She laughed. "That's nothing; it was thoroughly disinfected, and what a bill it was! There isn't the least risk."

At half-past nine next morning, Mrs. Van Basken rushed fiercely out of the gaudy *salon* which formed part of the big suite of rooms unwittingly engaged by her. She had rung the bell three times, with no result. In the hall she saw three servants, who scuttered away, at the sight of her, like rabbits on the appearance of a ferret. She marched into the sanctum full of wrath, and saw M. Alcide Grostet sitting at his desk with his face entombed in his hands. He started as she swept in, and dropped his hands. She saw that he looked very pale, though red under the eyes. His hair was awry, and his neck-tie ill tied.

"I have rung three times," she said vigorously, "and no fool has answered. What does it mean?"

The landlord gazed at her silently. A voice from behind exclaimed—

"It is the catastrophe, madame—the terrible catastrophe of M. Grostet."

She turned and glared at the last of the waiters, a little man with big whiskers, rolling eyes, and the terrific accent of the South.

"What catastrophe?"

"Madame has eloped."

"Yes," chimed in Alcide, with a gulp, "she has deserted me. I am desolate. I am a hearth without a fire. She has flown!"

"And with Albert, we believe, the waiter who said he was a loyal Alsatian, though I believe he was low German." This was uttered by the last of the chambermaids, a big, bony, pale woman from Normandy.

Alcide broke silence.

"It is true she has gone, madame. Yesterday I dismissed the fellow for impertinence to her. Alas, I fear she welcomed the impertinence. She has gone! My dove has flown; the dove-cot is empty. See, madame. You can read French?"

Of course, Mrs. Van Basken could read French, and speak it, too, as fluently and inaccurately as a police-court interpreter.

She took up the piece of paper.

"It's short," she remarked.

"As short as a woman's love," said

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M. Grostet, unconsciously translating Shakespeare. "You see, madame."

But she simply remarked, "Hold your tongue!" and read aloud: "'My poor Alcide, I leave you for ever! Words cannot express my grief, but it is destiny that separates us.'"

"Destiny," said the waiter from Cette, "is a good term for a red-haired German who squints."

Mrs. Van Basken continued—

"'I have striven against it, but vainly. Oh, my Alcide, we have loved one another! Forgive me—I can say no more.'"

"Oh, the women!" exclaimed Alcide. "We lived happily together. We prospered here for a while, then came that accursed man from Uruguay with the plague—plague on him!—and brought ruin, and she could not stand ruin."

"This is all very well," said the American widow, "but I told you two to get out!" And she turned to the last of the waiters and the last of the chambermaids with a glare that caused them to vanish quickly.

"Now, M. Grostet, I want my jewellery."

"Jewellery!" he mumbled. "What jewellery?"

She began fumbling in her bag, saying: "Surely you don't deny your receipt?"

"No, madame; but think of your talking of such things to a man who has just lost the lodestar of his life!" He put his hand into his pocket, took out his bunch of keys, opened the writing-desk, thrust his hand inside without looking. Less than a moment later he gave a little cry and flung open the top of his desk.

"The keys! My keys! Those keys!" he shouted. "Where are they?"

Mrs. Van Basken rushed to his side, and their four hands scrambled vainly in the desk, till she suggested that she should empty it, and they cast the things out, one after the other, on to the floor, but found no keys. Then he gave a great groan and shouted—

"The thief! The Judas! The daughter of an accursed tripe-seller! She has opened the safe and stolen the cash-box!"

"She has stolen my jewellery!"

"Oh, my cash-box! Oh, my Blondine!"

"Oh, my jewellery! Oh, you fool!"

The angry duet came to a close when she wisely suggested that they should send for a locksmith; and whilst they were waiting for him, Alcide indulged in frantic demonstrations of grief and anger. The village worthy came and looked about for the safe. When the matter was explained, he fumbled a while at the keyhole, and then the lady, suddenly seizing a chisel, recklessly stripped off the wooden panelling, and a square plate of metal was disclosed.

"There is no keyhole," said the locksmith, and gasped with surprise when informed that it was hidden beneath a big bar of steel that crossed the middle.

He was told to cut it with his cold chisel, so the village locksmith made a mighty stroke, but it barely scratched the metal.

"I might as well spit peas at an ironclad," he said. "You must send to Paris, unless, indeed, we can take out bricks from the side. Can't I get at it through that door?" And he pointed at the locked door.

"That door leads to the new wing," said M. Grostet. "The safe is lined with steel, but you can try it if you like."

The locksmith shuddered, and vowed he would not go through the door to the plague-stricken wing even if they offered to make him President of the Republic.

Mrs. Van Basken telegraphed to Paris for an expert safe-opener, and, at the suggestion of the hotel-keeper, for her lawyer and a detective. With a sort of melancholy air, he assured her that if the jewels were gone, he was responsible, but that this would not make the slightest difference to him now that ruin had come.

Some hours later the lawyer and detective and several men from a safe manufacturer's arrived by the same train. It was noticed with surprise, by the last of the cooks, that M. Alcide had eaten a big lunch, and, indeed, had finished everything and "licked the platter clean." The *cordon bleu* explained that, anxious to tempt the appetite of the bereaved proprietor, she had composed an elaborate menu of little dishes, hoping that he would make a meal by taking a mouthful out of each, and her amazement was considerable when she found that the plates had nothing left on them.

"Grief," said the waiter from Cette, "affects people differently. I myself ate heartily after my wife had run away. Still, it is strange, and all the wine is finished, though usually the master drinks only about half a bottle."

The detective busied himself and bored himself, too, by listening to the stories of everybody, and found them quite irreconcilable. The expert safe smashers worked energetically and spent much suitable language, yet several hours had gone by ere the detective pulled open the door, saying solemnly that he was afraid that the case

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would resemble the principal piece in the Humbert fraud.

The widow gazed in horror.

"My cash-box!" shouted M. Grostet. "My jewels!" shrieked the other, but the thing contained nothing of the sort. It seemed clear that the beautiful Blondine had made a prodigious haul and got a formidable start. The detective was sent to the telegraph office, and spent a small fortune in telegrams concerning the fugitive lady and the suspected waiter. Alcide had a huge dinner, and once more surprised the cook as to the form taken by his grief. Mrs. Van Basken merely took a little soup and a cutlet.

Next morning telegrams began to come in, rich in words and nothing else. At midday arrived the news that the waiter called Albert had been arrested, and stoutly denied his guilt, but his manner was so suspicious that he was detained. The detective hastened to Basle in order to see him.

The evening brought another catastrophe. On the return of the courier from countless futile errands, Mrs. Van Basken, in discussing her loss with him, caused the man to remark that it was a pity she had not kept the jewellery in her own hands. She was so much provoked by the obvious wisdom of the observation, which she had made countless times to herself, that she said she was not likely to keep them in her room, seeing that she had a courier concerning whom she knew so little.

As the result of this, the man asserted that M. Grostet was very well acquainted with him, to which the lady replied by saying that the hotel-keeper denied any knowledge of him. Thereupon the courier insisted upon being confronted with him, and, as soon as Alcide entered, he accused him fiercely of defamation.

There was a triangular squabble as to what had really been said, and in the end the courier bluntly observed that he thought the whole thing "a put-up job," and expected quite as much from M. Grostet. Alcide, furious at the insult, raised his hand, and the other man gave him a tremendous blow with his fist which sent him down like a felled tree. As he dropped, his head hit the corner of a cabinet, and the little man lay inert on the floor, irresponsive to burnt feathers, smelling-salts, orange-flower water, and a dozen other foolish remedies. He had a big dent in his skull.

When the village doctor, Monsieur Thomassin, a burly, rough fellow, arrived, he promptly said that a surgeon from Paris must be called in, as the case was beyond his art, and probably involved trepanning. Mrs. Van Basken asked who was going to pay, to which he answered that her man had caused the mischief, and the law might be very unpleasant if she did not get the best professional help possible. So she gave way.

She did not sleep very well that night, but dozed off in the early morning. Suddenly she found herself awakened. She sat up in bed and listened. Vaguely, indistinctly, she seemed to hear distant shrieks and sounds, and also the voice of someone calling out the name of Alcide. She was a plucky woman, so she got up, scrambled into some clothes, and ventured out of her room in the direction of the sounds, which ceased quite suddenly as she reached the hall. She stood still listening for a while, and the idea came that she had been merely dreaming, so she crawled back to bed and almost forgot about the matter.

When the surgeon from Paris arrived and examined the hotel-keeper, he pulled a long face, and then, after a chat with the local man, performed an operation, and recommended that the patient should be kept quiet, if possible, for some days, and stated that perhaps he might remain unconscious for nearly a week.

Mrs. Van Basken wanted to leave, but, despite the suggestions of the courier, she fancied that Alcide was honest, and felt it her duty to stay till he was out of danger. The next night she barely slept a wink—at least, she thought so—but in the morning the chambermaid, pale-faced and trembling, told her that there had been screams in the new wing, and that it was haunted.

Now, the American widow, though in many respects a shrewd woman, believed in a good deal of tomfoolery about ghosts and visions and apparitions of quite a vulgar character, and readily accepted the idea that the spirit of the dead Uruguayan was haunting the new wing, and when tales came from the village of dancing lights in the windows, she was awe-stricken.

Several days later, just as it was growing dark, the sick-nurse hurried into Mrs. Van Basken's room—for everyone seemed to regard the American as being a person in authority—and told her to come quickly to the chamber of the hotel-keeper, who was once more conscious.

The moment that she saw poor Alcide he said—

"Have they found her?"

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"No," she answered roughly; "the hussy's safe."

"What's the matter with me? I feel weak, sick, faint."

"The courier knocked you down, and you hurt your head."

"Oh, yes, I remember, I remember. What time is it?"

"Ten o'clock," she answered, holding her watch up to the electric light.

"Then I've been unconscious some hours."

"Some hours!" said the nurse, with a laugh. "Some days! This is Friday, and you were hurt last Saturday."

"Last Saturday!" he repeated, as if the words had no meaning. "Last Saturday!" Then his eyelids dropped for a while. Suddenly he started with a cry of horror.

"A week—a week! She will die—she must be dead!"

"She—who?"

He struggled to rise; the nurse firmly but gently held him back.

"I must get up—I must get up! She's starving, my poor darling, my Blondine!"

"He's raving," said the one woman to the other.

At this moment the doctor came in and asked what was the matter.

"She's starving! Let me get up!" screamed Alcide, struggling fiercely.

"My poor fellow, you're under a delusion," said the doctor. "She's all right—she has not been found."

Alcide ceased struggling and closed his eyes. The nurse took her hands off him, and he sprang out of bed with surprising strength and dashed out of the room. They ran after him, and found him at the locked door in the sanctum, pulling at the door-handle and calling for the key. He turned round as they entered.

"It's all up—the game's up. She took the jewels, and I hid her there in the new wing. She's starving!"

His manner convinced them that he spoke the truth.

"Where's the key?"

"I don't know," moaned Alcide; "I can't remember. I hid it. I don't know. Burst the door open!"

"Yes, doctor, burst the door open!" said the last of the cooks, the last of the chambermaids, and the last of the waiters in a chorus. "She'll be nearly dead!"

The doctor flung himself against the door vainly.

"Get the locksmith," said Alcide. But Doctor Thomassin ran into the hall, and, seizing a bench, brought it back and used it successfully as a battering-ram. All ran forward in the dark till they reached the next door, which was also locked.

"She must be dead, or we should hear something," said the waiter from Cette.

"She wouldn't be dead of hunger so soon," answered the doctor.

"Then it's the plague that's killed her!" screamed the Norman chambermaid, and there was a stampede of servants.

Alcide was fumbling at the electric light switches and moaning piteously.

"Turn on the light from the main," he shouted to the cook.

A minute later the light glowed on a group of three—the doctor, the American widow, and the hotel-keeper, for the nurse had retired. Doctor Thomassin told Mrs. Van Basken that she was not needed, and there was danger, but she stoutly refused to go back, so he returned for the bench and smashed in the door.

"This way," said Alcide, and they followed him up a flight of stairs, and then along a corridor ill lighted by the moon shining through the window. At the fourth door he paused.

"Courage, my good fellow!" murmured the doctor.

Alcide opened the door and switched on the light. No one was inside, but all the furniture was upset except the table, on which were some empty plates and dishes. No sound was heard by the party save that of their own breathing. All paused at the inner door, then the trembling Alcide opened it, gave a scream, and sank down. The doctor stepped forward, then started back.

"Hold him," he said gravely.

The widow was not strong enough. Alcide rushed forward. The little woman was lying on the ground half clad, apparently dead. Huge gleaming necklaces looked horrible on her shrunken neck, big bracelets of brilliants glittered on her thin arms. Her hands bore no rings—even her wedding-ring seemed to have fallen off her shrivelled finger. Alcide flung himself down by her side, sobbing and incoherently uttering her name and strange pet names, and cursing himself and the jewels and Mrs. Van Basken.

"She can't be dead of hunger in this time," said the widow. "It's not quite a week."

"No, she may be alive still," answered the doctor. "Be a man, Monsieur Grostet. Let me examine her. She may be alive. We may save her; you hinder me."

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"Alcide rushed forward."

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"What is the good?" shrieked the poor man. "Better she is dead! I will join her. Better she is dead now than be sent to gaol for life, or for many years, and then to come out and starve. Let me be—let her die!"

"Madame," said M. Thomassin, "I am a doctor, not a spiritual adviser, but these people have been terribly tempted and fearfully punished." He pushed Alcide gently to one side and began to examine Blondine. The innkeeper held her by one hand and wept bitterly.

"Doctor," answered Mrs. Van Basken, "this matter has made me think a great deal. You're right. Monsieur Grostet, you and your wife shall go unpunished. We'll fix up some tale about this that will clear you, though I hate telling lies."

"What's the good?" he replied, sobbing pitifully. "She's dead! Nothing matters. I shall kill myself!"

The doctor gave a sudden start. "She's not dead. Quick—hold him back! She's broken her leg, see—poor thing!—and been delirious, probably for some days; but there's life in her, and I dare say we'll pull her round." He took her up in his arms. "She weighs nothing, poor woman!" He laid her on the bed, pushing aside some jewel cases that lay on it, and gaudy stones fell out of them.

Alcide remained sobbing.

The widow put her hand on his shoulder. "You don't understand. She's alive, and she'll get all right, and you and she will go free; and, what's more, I'll advance you enough money to start quietly in business in New York, out of range of your creditors, and you can pay them at your leisure, if you're honest."

The innkeeper took the widow's hand and kissed it warmly.

"Now," said the doctor, "if you're not afraid, madame, perhaps you'll stay with her for half an hour, whilst I have this poor fellow put back in bed. Then I'll send some bouillon as soon as possible for you to put slowly down her throat, and I'll get a nurse, and nobody is to have a word with either of the poor creatures till we've concocted our explanation. You'd better gather those rings and things, and take off the bracelets and necklaces, and hide them."

Then he led the innkeeper away.

The sale of Mrs. Van Basken's jewellery made a big sensation in New York, and not even the cleverest newspaper man succeeded in learning or guessing the object of the widow in putting them up, and retaining nothing but her wedding-ring. Indeed, the reason why she suddenly devoted her life to good works is one of the mysteries of that wonderful city.

M. and Madame Grostet have a capital little restaurant in a rather fashionable street, and are getting on well. It is, however, noticeable that he is greatly changed, and shows little of his former genius for business. Blondine is no longer the pretty Madame Grostet, for her hair is prematurely white, her face is thin and shows signs of suffering, and she limps. Indeed, all her comeliness has gone, save, indeed, that, when she looks at her husband, there is a transitory beauty in her face, and it is possible, when he is near her, to see a real charm of expression on his homely countenance.

AN AUTUMN DAY.

THROUGH dry and hurrying leaves,
Golden our way;
Sound of the wind south-west
From the wild day!

Wild all thy loosened hair,
Blown in my eyes,
Till thou dost seem a part
Of autumn skies.

Wild from the setting sun
Rushes the rain;
Ah, be it true or false,
Thy kiss again!

STEPHEN PHILLIPS.

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Some Letters and Their Writers.

By ELLEN TERRY.

WHEN the famous Russian dancer, Anna Pavlova, took farewell of London last summer, after an engagement which was one long, triumphant success from beginning to end, she said that there were two things in our city which had left an abiding impression on her. One was the remarkable cleanliness of the Palace Theatre, where she danced, and the other was the way in which members of the audience wrote to thank her for the pleasure which she had given them by her dancing. To Pavlova it was a new and very pleasing experience. "I have never had letters from members of an audience until I came to London," she said. "It seemed strange at first, yet now I already find it all natural, and very beautiful and thoughtful."

To-day I was looking through a box of old letters, and I began to realise for the first time that the desire of an English audience to express its gratitude through the post to artists who please it—a desire which a fresh mind, a Russian mind, has noticed as peculiarly English—was responsible for the bulky box and for many more boxes like it. Very nice it is to read some of the letters after long years. It is both beautiful and thoughtful of these strangers to write, as Anna Pavlova says; and in some of the letters I find valuable criticism, which may be less grateful and comforting, but is certainly more interesting than pretty compliments. Whether the exquisite Pavlova could say the same of her English letter-bag, I don't know. Dancing does not occupy the position in England that it does in Russia, and I fancy few English people know enough about the art of the dance to criticise the dancer. In St. Petersburg, I am told, they have special dance critics, and the general public are fastidious and discriminating to the last degree about their beloved ballet. When a dancer has an inspired moment, the audience stand up and shout their recognition. Anna Pavlova may never have heard that shout in London, but the nobility of gesture, the beauty of line, the lightness, the elevation, and all the essentials of dancing, which she possesses in their loveliest forms, were appreciated in England even if they were not understood.

CHARLES READE.

"The English public may be slow, but they are generous and very faithful."

That was said to me years ago, but I think it is still true.

Now, I am going to take some letters out of my box at random. The first two tell a dreadful tale. They are not from kind strangers and well-wishers in front, but from two well-known men, both writers and friends of mine. The dreadful tale both tell is of the danger of the wrong envelope. I am forced to wonder if I often send a letter to A. in an envelope addressed to B. It looks like it. For here I find Mr. Watts-Dunton—the author of "Aylwin," and for many years the inseparable companion and friend of Swinburne—sending me in 1892, by special messenger—the messenger being "my nephew, to whom Swinburne addressed sixty poems when the lad was in short frocks"—a mis-sent epistle beginning "Dear Addie." "I send it at once," writes Mr. Watts-Dunton, "because I am impatient to get my letter, whose place in my envelope 'Dear Addie' has invaded. I am dying to know what it was

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about. Only I hope it contained no more apologies for having forgotten to reply to my inquiries about a young lady who is aspiring to move in the theatrical world. On such little points of etiquette no man is more touchy than I am. I nearly lost Browning's friendship because a letter from him to me, in answer to one of mine, was lost in the post, and this set up my conceited little back. But *you* are different from all my other correspondents."

I am glad, for Mr. Watts-Dunton's sake, I was. I grieve to say that the passing of seventeen years does not seem to have made me more cautious about the wrong envelope, for the second letter in my hand, a letter from Mr. Bernard Shaw, is dated 1909, and convicts me of the same lapse. "On seeing the words 'Dearest Ida' at the beginning of your letter," he writes, "I read no further, and tried to find out from Edy" (my daughter) "who Ida is; but she said there are so many Idas that she couldn't guess which was the right one." (It was my little *friend* Ida D—— I think.) "I should have

Photo by] [*Underwood & Underwood, London & New York.*

MADAME ANNA PAVLOVA.

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wired, but Smallhythe is not a telegraph office ; and I did not catch Edy—who spends her life now in Bow Street, fortunately not in the dock—until too late. Now, tell Ida to send me my letter, for which I wait with burning impatience."

Photo by] *[The Sphere & Tatler.*

MR. THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

By the way, one can never be certain, when one treasures a letter from a distinguished person, that one is treasuring his actual handwriting as well as his sentiments. Busy men who don't give themselves away by employing a typewriter have been known to dictate their letters to secretaries whose writing is just like their own, only better. Perhaps that neat little "G. B. S." penmanship—— But perish the thought ! Anyhow, give me any handwriting before typewriting, unless it is a business communication. There is something about a typewritten letter which makes it impossible to regard it as a personal thing at all, whatever ideas it may express. Handwriting gives the personal touch, the grace and character—above all, the *emphasis* of an individual. A typewritten letter may be spontaneous, but it never looks it; it's a cold-blooded affair, revealing nothing

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and concealing nothing. The machine steps between the sender of the letter and its recipient, and puts an end to speculation. Was the sender well or ill when the letter was written? Was it composed in a hurry or well considered? Was it the outcome of agitation, which the correspondent tried to hide? The handwriting is often a more faithful key to the state of mind of the letter-writer than the words employed. *Consider!* If we only knew our friends through the telephone and the typewriter, how little we should really know of them!

To go back to my letter-bag. Having tried to recover from "the wrong envelope" revelation, and laughed at "G.B.S.'s" allusion to my daughter's association with the militant Suffragists, I turn up a dear little letter from a child — just such a letter as any simple, nice child of ten might write, yet my correspondent at the time was, for her years, a finished professional dancer, and earning a salary which ran into three figures—

"DEAR AUNT IMOGEN, — I would love to come and spend a week with you at your farm in summer; it would be lovely. I am very busy packing my dollie's things to take away with me to Manchester.

"With fond love from your little pet,

"ELISE."

[Photo by] [Russell & Sons.

MRS. BOYD CARPENTER.

We hear a great deal of the evils of stage life, and the beneficent arm of the Law has intervened of recent years to raise the age at which children may be employed in the theatre. Children suffer, say those who don't really know, from staying up as late as theatre hours demand, and from other sacrifices of the ordinary healthy conditions under which children should be brought up.

Of course, there have been cases when a child, treated by its parents merely as an instrument of gain, has suffered cruelly, and other cases in which the parents, less deliberately inhuman, have had their sensibilities too much blunted by poverty and fatigue to notice what a strain the theatre was putting on their child. But I doubt whether it is fair to blame the theatre for these cases, happily rare in my experience.

We have to consider whether the unfortunate little victims of parental brutality and indifference would be better off outside the theatre. At the Lyceum, in old days, we used to employ children whose homes were miserable and wretched, whose recreation consisted chiefly in "larking" in the streets and waiting outside public-houses for their parents. It can hardly be denied that to such children the theatre is a refining influence, and opens a way for them to rise above their surroundings. The lessons to be learned in a theatre—manners, obedience, the equality of men and women as wage-earners (no suggestion there of women being paid less than men for the same work, simply because they *are* women), are not, however, only for such children as I have described. They are just as valuable for the curled darlings from happier homes. Apart from the immense practical advantages of being trained for the stage in childhood — some technical lessons simply *cannot* be learned in later years—there is a *moral* advantage. If you begin as a child—I think everyone knows by this time that I began when I was eight, so I speak from my own experience—you are able to preserve an entirely natural attitude towards your work through life. It is as a workshop, or, say, a studio, that you regard the theatre, not as a dazzling world where everything is turned to triumphs and to gold. In my case, acting was originally part of my duty to my parents. I was never conscious of that diversity from those round me which either brings despairing sadness or a false sense of superiority and importance to the single member of a family who takes to the stage, often against the family's wishes, in later life.

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DR. BOYD CARPENTER, BISHOP OF RIPON.

Photograph by Dinham, Torquay.

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Although, as you may see from what I have written so far, I am strongly in favour of children on the stage, I do think that the system of giving two performances a day imposes too great a strain. At Christmas-time it is the custom in England to give one day both a *matinée* and an evening performance of plays of the type of "Peter Pan" and "The Blue Bird," in which a great number of children are employed. I have always been in favour of a double company in these cases, one to play in the afternoon and the other in the evening. The plan would be good for the "unemployed," of whom, alas, there are many even in the child-actors ranks, and if it were too expensive for the managers, they could meet the expense by reducing the salaries a little. It is better for a child to be paid less and to keep its health than to earn a big salary at the cost of a shattered nervous system.

Photo by [*The Dover Street Studios.*

MISS ELISE CRAVEN.

I think my little correspondent, Elise Craven, with her dollie's clothes and the rest, ought to convince most of my readers that the stage need not spoil a child. At any rate, statements to the contrary ought not to be made without a very close and intimate knowledge of the theatre. A good nature is not easily spoiled, and all the adulation and flattery which a child-actress gets will not rub the bloom off her simplicity if she is of a simple disposition. If she has a tendency the other way—even very small children give themselves airs sometimes—it is more likely to be corrected in the theatre than encouraged.

I have spoken rather strongly about this, but I feel it a hundred times more. Instead of dragging children off the stage, protecting them from imaginary evils, and doing a lot of harm to secure an imaginary good, I should like to see their stage education organised and put on the same basis as, say, the Imperial Schools of Dancing in Russia.

I should like children to go on the stage when they are seven years old, and are pliable in mind and body—an age when they can be taught anything. During these first years on the stage, besides a thorough training in every branch of their profession, which would include a good deal of physical development, they should receive a *solid* grounding in other subjects, but of a simple, practical kind. They would have to submit

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SIR HENRY IRVING AS SHYLOCK.

From the photograph by Lyddell Sawyer, now copyright by Barratt.

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to control from everyone, from manager to dresser. I believe they would learn decent conduct, and how to distinguish good acting from bad. When they arrive at the age when they can no longer play children's parts, and taught all sorts of subjects, *with a view* to their future career, and in no sense limited by it, and they should learn thoroughly at least one modern language. The acting of plays would, of course, be in the curriculum.

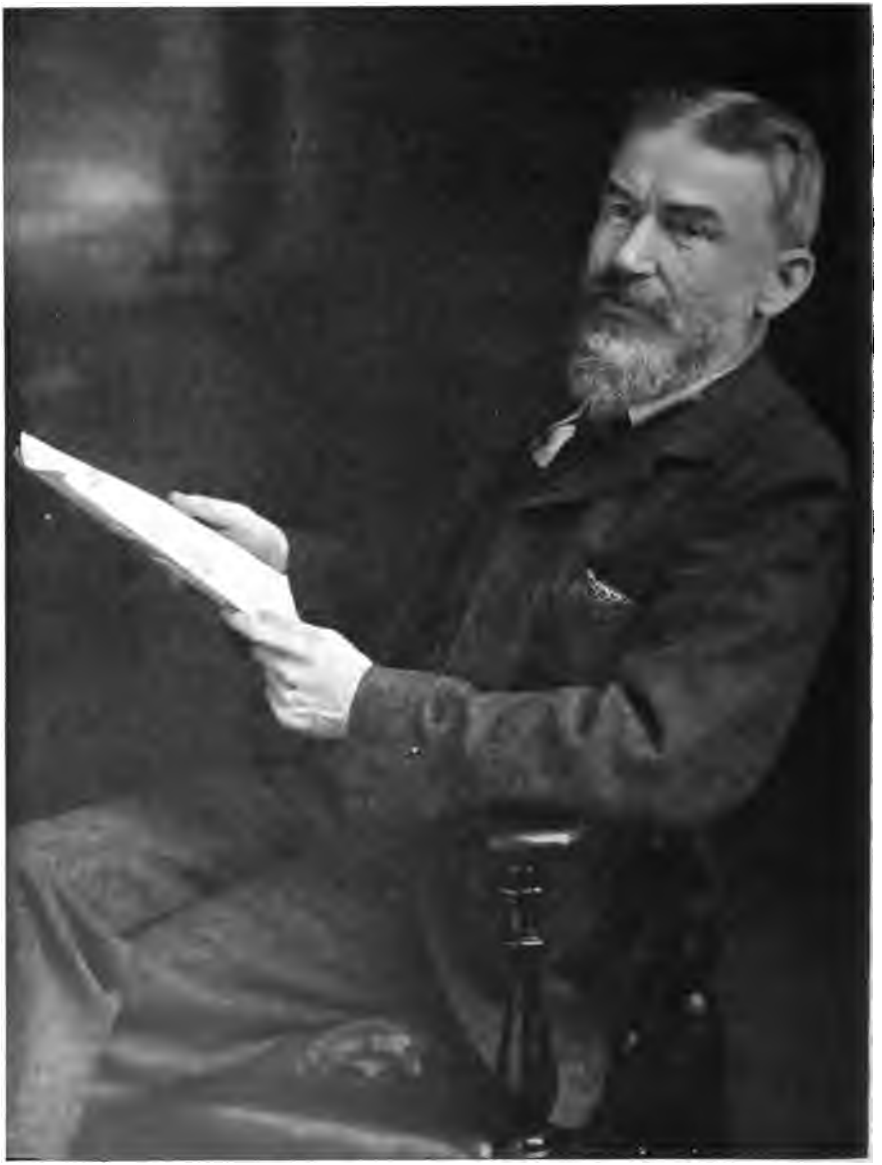

Photo by] [*Whitlock & Sons.*

MR. G. BERNARD SHAW.

are too young for grown-up parts, I would send them away from the stage to schools, which, if we *had* State control of theatres, should be in connection with our national theatre. At these schools they should receive a magnificent all-round education, be I believe a scheme like this, of which I have merely sketched the roughest outline, would produce a new and greatly-improved race of actors and actresses. Not only would the standard of acting in England be raised, but the atmosphere of the theatre

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ELLEN TERRY AS NANCE OLDFIELD.

Photograph by Window & Grove.

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would be purged of many unwholesome elements.

Naturally, among the letters before me, there are several asking me to help stage aspirants. Unless I have had personal experience of a girl's aptitude for the stage, and am convinced that her love for it is of the stuff which endures—the stuff which is proof against disappointment and disillusionment—my first move is to discourage the

Photo by] [*H. Manuel, Paris.*

MISS MARY GARDEN.

"stage-struck." This isn't so cruel as it sounds, for, if there is a real vocation, it will stand any amount of discouragement, any number of refusals. I was interested to hear the other day that a similar attitude is taken up by religious houses towards girls who want to become nuns. The authorities always begin with a refusal, and represent the religious life in its most forbidding light. If, after three such refusals, the applicant is still firmly determined, it is assumed that she means business, and the difficulties are smoothed away. Every sort of encouragement is given. I have no doubt that this is the way to test both the ability and the will in all professions and vocations.

Some of the letters begging me to help aspiring young girls to positions on the stage, or to give advice to older ones who have suddenly discovered that the reason why they have failed in everything else is that they are born actresses, show but the remotest idea of the stern fact that something more than a *taste* for the stage is necessary before even "the small part at your theatre"—which is generally asked for—can be filled *at all*. Nothing is more extraordinary than the way the outsider ignores this. In a letter before me, from the late Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, one of the most intelligent and enthusiastic patrons of the theatre I ever knew, asking me to interest myself in a young friend of hers who wanted to go on the stage, there is absolutely no

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trace of this light-hearted assumption that anyone can act who wants to. The Duchess of Teck speaks in the most kindly way of her *protégée*, but writes with a full realisation of the difficulties which the stage presents to a beginner. This letter reminds me to be glad that the present Queen of England had such a wise, clever mother. Princess May, as Queen Mary was in those days, was often brought to the Lyceum, and once, I remember, Henry Irving gave a supper in the Beefsteak Room in honour of her birthday.

Photo by] *[J. Russell & Sons.*

A SCENE FROM MR. WILLIAM POEL'S PRODUCTION OF "THE COMEDY OF ERRORS" IN THE ELIZABETHAN MANNER.

The Princess had been to see "Charles I." a week or two before, and when she was asked to choose her birthday treat, she chose "Charles I." again, and the "Beefsteak" supper was added.

The Princess's young friend joined the Lyceum Company, worked hard, and was very popular, but I don't think she ever had a part. It was not easy to get a part at the Lyceum, but I think the girls who walked on in Henry Irving's big productions of Shakespeare had an excellent training. I sometimes wished it could have been possible for them to see more of the acting in the scenes in which they were not concerned, but there are many difficulties in the way of allowing "supers" to stand at the side, however much one may wish it.

The next letter I take out of my box is on this very subject. Its writer is Lewis Carroll (Mr. Dodgson), the author of our immortal "Alice in Wonderland." He took the deepest interest in the theatre, and would often write to me not only about the Lyceum performances, but about all kinds of little details of theatrical life which one would not have thought an Oxford don would be interested in. But then this don had written "Alice."

"My dear Miss Ellen Terry," he writes from Christchurch, Oxford, in 1894, "I hope you won't think me an intolerable correspondent, but I want you to read *one* more letter of mine. It only takes, as I know by experience, two or three minutes to *read* a letter that may have taken a good hour or more to *write* . . . . The matter I want to put before you is, I think, of great importance to the whole of the theatrical profession. I'll try to put it very briefly.

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"In every theatre there are, I suppose: (1) some four or five lady performers; (2) some twenty or thirty minor ones; (3) a host of 'supers' and understudies with nothing to say, and little or nothing to do except to wait.

"Of course, those in (2) are in training for better things, and many will some day belong to (1). Similarly, many in (3) will some day rise to (2).

"Now, if an actor or actress is to learn the business and rise to higher things, surely one of the most important things is to *see* as much good acting as possible.

"And then members of (2) and (3) are, night after night, present in a theatre where good acting is going on, and where the greatest possible benefit might be got by simply watching, and yet in many cases are debarred from ever getting that benefit."

The letter goes on to suggest a plan which would meet the objection that if "supers" were allowed to watch, the wings would be inconveniently crowded. "I would examine the wings"—Mr. Dodgson was always so precise and meticulous, as became a great mathematician—"and see how many people could stand there without being in the way. Suppose I found room for three on each side"—Mr. Dodgson's letters always remind me of arithmetic: If cistern A flows at the rate of 6 gallons an hour into cistern B, etc., etc.—"then there might be six watching. I would make strict rules as to who the six should be, and would arrange so that all the minor performers and 'supers' should have the privilege in turn; also that those who were watching should *not* be those who would be wanted immediately to go on—*e.g.*, a 'super' only wanted in Act III. might safely be watching in Act II., and I would arrange so that, as far as possible, everyone should witness, say, in the course of a week or a fortnight, the whole play bit by bit."

I don't know how I answered this letter, but I do know how I ought to have answered it. With our Lyceum system of lightning-quick changes of scene, those three people watching left and right would have been impossible. Henry Irving brought those changes of scene to a perfection of which present-day managements might well be envious, but the result was secured only by the perfect adjustment of the different parts of the huge machine of his theatrical staff. Every man had his place, like a sailor aboard ship, and when the Lyceum watch was called, and all the lights went out, and all hands, under Skipper Arnott, our despotic and capable stage carpenter, were engaged in "striking" a heavy scene and setting up another in a minute and a half, without dropping the curtain, I fancy those six eager "supers," students of Mr. Dodgson's imaginary calculations, would have been swept to their death. My daughter Edy, who was one of the few "supers" who did watch at the wings, tells me that if she had not known to a tick what the men were going to do at the end of the scene, and calculated where she was going to get out of their way, she must have been hurt or have interfered with them, which, she says, with the true spirit of the child of the theatre, "would have been worse, as Arnott would have gone to Henry and said his men couldn't change the scene in the time if they were hindered by people standing about on the stage."

I have crowds of other letters asking me to suggest certain things to Henry Irving, but, as a rule, I seldom bothered him by passing on the suggestions. There is an old saying about the cobbler sticking to his last, and really most of the people who were full of reforms and improvements that I ought to urge on Henry were in the position of the cobbler, and needed similar advice.

In this matter of the "supers," I am certain Henry would have found a way of their watching at the side if it had been possible and advisable. But, besides the objection I have mentioned, there was the fear of the "three on either side" whispering to each other, or speaking to someone who was just going on, and so delaying his entrance. The slightest noise "behind" will make some actors nervous. I know Henry could not recover during a whole scene if he heard talking just before he went on. In what is called a "boxed-in" scene, he would not have minded the "supers" being there, and I think many of them used to come down and listen in "Olivia," which had such a scene.

To my letter-bag once more. Some letters don't *wear* well. I don't mean physically, although, by the way, I see that Madame J——'s curious gold-leaf paper has worn well, and is as bright as a guinea still. I can't bear these fanciful writing-papers myself. When I wrote that letters don't wear well, I was thinking more of the *ideas* than the paper. At the time the letter was written, no doubt the thought was fresh and the expression sincere, but with the years both have faded like flowers and signify nothing. Henry Irving's letters, on the contrary, have yielded nothing to time. Vital, forcible, simple, individual, and telling, they are of unfading interest. They simply have no

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fault except that the handwriting is most difficult to read. In one sentence he suggests more sometimes than other correspondents do in a whole very long letter. I have before me a letter of his concerning Shylock, and it opens up a question which I would love to discuss in detail, but it is perhaps too technical for a magazine article. Henry thought that the way he played Shylock was and make a success of it. (Examples: Mrs. Siddons's "Lady Macbeth," and Henry Irving's "Shylock.") He can leave an unsuitable part alone altogether. He can find certain characteristics in it which he is able to express, and develop *them*, perhaps in this way finding the highest truth. But the question is too big to discuss in a hurry.

The next letter is from Miss Mary Garden.

Photo by] *[Shawcross, Guildford.*

"LEWIS CARROLL" (REV. CHARLES LUTWIDGE DODGSON).

the *wrong* way, though the right way for him. "Shylock was a ferocity, there's no doubt about it," he writes to me, "but *I* cannot play the part on those lines."

What ought an actor to do? There are three, perhaps four, courses open to him. He can play a part as he thinks right, hindered and hampered at every turn by his physique. He can go against his theories in order to adapt the part to his physique and personality,

I remember seeing her in "Griselidis," at Aix-les-Bains, some years ago, and being immensely struck by her talent as an actress. I forgot all about her singing—forgot even it was an opera I was watching—in admiration of her acting. "What an amazing thing!" I thought, for opera does not generally develop such a gift. It was the *stillness* of her "Griselidis." But perhaps she could only do that. How much of it was assumption?

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Then I saw her in another opera, and she was the acme of vivacity.

From Miss Mary Garden to the Bishop of Ripon. Dr. Boyd-Carpenter has always taken a friendly interest in the stage. This note from him is merely a note of courtesy, of no particular interest, but it reminds me of a delightful Good Friday I spent at Leeds, where I heard the Bishop give an address to a large audience of working-men. Mrs. Boyd-Carpenter and I were the only two women present. The Bishop spoke splendidly. He was *en rapport* with his listeners at once; his timing was perfect and his utterance beautifully clear. Suddenly there came a change. He went too fast, and I noticed that he was losing his hold on the audience. But he pulled himself up, altered his pace, and it was all right again. I could not help telling Mrs. Boyd-Carpenter afterwards that I had noticed it, and had admired the way he had recovered. "I was willing him to do that," she said. "I always let him know when he is going too fast." This seemed to me an interesting case of telepathy. The Zanczigs could hardly have done better.

I remember telling the Bishop of Ripon that I envied his splendid memory. "I seem to remember a thing quite well," I told him, "then I get frightened." The Bishop said: "That's the worst thing you can do. Memory is a very delicate organ, and resents distrust."

I am afraid I must often have provoked my memory to resentment.

> When I was young, and in a pet,
> I prayed: Lord, teach me to forget.
> Now I am old, and in December,
> I pray: Lord, teach me to remember.

A letter from Mrs. Field, that dear Boston lady who, in her time, has known nearly all the literary giants of the Victorian era, and whose house is as full of literary relics as Cologne Cathedral of bones, tells me that she likes my "Nance Oldfield," and adds: "I wonder if you ever knew Charles Reade?" This must have been in the early days of my friendship with Mrs. Field, for I don't think I could know anyone long without talking of Charles Reade, one of the best friends I ever had, one of my best critics, too, and a generous, lovable soul with just enough obstinacy to make him provoking at times.

Another American correspondent—Augustus Saint-Gaudens. He writes about a cast of his Bastien-Lepage that he had made for me. Why hasn't England produced a Saint-Gaudens? Then London might not be so full of ugly statues.

William Poel, whose Elizabethan stage performances of Shakespeare have always interested me deeply, writes:—

"Dear Miss Ellen Terry,—Can you do a struggling enthusiast of Shakespeare—without scenery!—a friendly service, and act 'Lady Macduff' for me at my first performance at Fulham? It is, so far as I know, the first time this lady has been seen on the stage for three hundred years, and I want to honour her reappearance by giving her to someone of repute."

I would gladly have done this for Mr. Poel, but I was prevented for some reason or other. Someone said:—

"But is 'Lady Macduff' a good part?" It strikes me as a good *little* part, which is always better than a bad *big* part; but then I know some actresses would turn up their noses at "Phœbe," which I think a delightful part—full of character. Some people have such odd ideas about good and bad parts. I was once told that it was time I gave up playing "second-fiddle" parts *like* "Desdemona" and "Ophelia"!

Mr. Poel I admire, even though I may not agree with his theories, because he has gone his own way about Shakespeare, and has constructed something *new*. So many others go through the Lyceum gap like a flock of sheep. There is no variety in Shakespearian productions. I think that the reason why I like a music-hall is because it has *variety*, at any rate. Each performer thinks for himself and works out his own ideas. There is none of that slavish adherence to a certain line of acting and staging which makes some theatres so dull.

My box is not nearly empty yet, but I find, on examination, that many of the priceless documents tucked away there are only receipts! These, too, could tell a tale. And now I must go and read some letters not written to me—letters in Shakespeare's plays. Most people do not realise how many letters there are, nor how deeply interesting they are. It was my work to "discover" them—to find something in Shakespeare which had not been dug up by the commentators, and from that "find," which was there for everyone to see, like the little herb in Milton's "Comus," on which the rude hind "treads daily with his clouted shoon," originated the whole scheme of those Shakespearian lectures which have been my "medium" during the last two years both here and in America.

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HOMEWARD BOUND.

By WILLIAM HOPE HODGSON,

Author of "The Boats of the 'Glen Carrig,'" "The Night Land," etc.

THE old *Shamraken*, sailing-ship, had been many days upon the water. She was old—older than her masters, and that was saying a great deal. She seemed in no hurry as she lifted her bulging old wooden sides through the seas. What need for hurry? She would arrive some time, in some fashion, as had been her habit heretofore.

Two matters were especially noticeable among her crew, who were also her masters—the first, the agedness of each and every one; the second, the *family* sense which appeared to bind them, so that the ship seemed manned by a crew all of whom were related one to the other. Yet it was not so.

A strange company they were, each man bearded, aged, and grizzled, yet there was nothing of the inhumanity of old age about them, save it might be in their freedom from grumbling, and the calm content which comes only to those in whom the more violent passions have died.

Had anything to be done, there was nothing of the growling inseparable from the average run of sailor-men. They went aloft to the "job"—whatever it might be—with the wise submission which is brought only by age and experience. Their work was gone through with a certain slow pertinacity—a sort of tired steadfastness born of the knowledge that such work *had* to be done. Moreover, their hands possessed the ripe skill which comes only from exceeding practice, and which went far to make amends for the feebleness of age. Above all, their movements, slow as they might be, were remorseless in their lack of faltering. They had so often performed the same kind of work, that they had arrived, by the selection of utility, at the shortest and most simple methods of doing it.

They had, as I have said, been many days upon the water, though I am not sure that any man in her knew to a nicety the number of those days. The skipper, Abe Tombes—addressed usually as Skipper Abe—may have had some notion, for he might be seen at times gravely adjusting a prodigious quadrant, which suggests that he kept some sort of record of time and place.

Of the crew of the *Shamraken*, some half dozen were seated, working placidly at such matters of seamanship as were necessary. Besides these, there were others about the decks—a couple who paced the lee side of the main deck, smoking and exchanging an occasional word; one who sat by the side of a worker, and made odd remarks between draws at his pipe; another out upon the jibboom, who fished, with a line, hook, and white rag, for bonito. This last was Nuzzie, the ship's boy. He was grey-bearded, and his years numbered five-and-fifty. A boy of fifteen he had been when he joined the *Shamraken*, and "boy" he was still, though forty years had passed into eternity since the day of his "signing on," for the men of the *Shamraken* lived in the past, and knew him only as the "boy" of that past.

It was Nuzzie's watch below—his time for sleeping. This might have been said also of the other three men who talked and smoked; but for themselves they had scarce a thought of sleep. Healthy age sleeps little, and they were in health, though so ancient.

Presently one of those who walked the lee side of the main deck, chancing to cast a glance forrad, observed Nuzzie still to be out upon the jibboom, jerking his line so as to delude some foolish bonito into the belief that the white rag was a flying fish.

The smoker nudged his companion.

"Time thet b'y 'ad 'is sleep."

"Aye, aye, mate," returned the other, withdrawing his pipe and giving a steadfast look at the figure seated out upon the jibboom.

For the half of a minute they stood there, very effigies of Age's implacable determination to rule rash Youth. Their pipes were held in their hands, and the smoke rose up in little eddies from the smouldering contents of the bowls.

"Thar's no tamin' of thet b'y," said the first man, looking very stern and determined.

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Then he remembered his pipe, and took a draw.

"B'ys is tur'ble queer critters," remarked the second man, and remembered his pipe in turn.

"Fishin' w'en 'e orter be sleepin'!" snorted the first man.

"B'ys needs a tur'ble lot er sleep," said the second man. "I 'member w'en I wor a b'y. I reckon it's ther growin'."

And all the time poor Nuzzie fished on.

"Guess I'll jest step up an' tell 'im ter come in outer thet," exclaimed the first man, and commenced to walk towards the steps leading up on to the fo'c'sle head.

"B'y!" he shouted, as soon as his head was above the level of the fo'c'sle deck. "B'y!"

Nuzzie looked round at the second call.

"Eh?" he sung out.

"Yew come in outer that!" shouted the older man, in the somewhat shrill tone which age had brought to his voice. "Reckon we'll be 'avin' yer sleepin' at ther wheel ter-night."

"Aye," joined in the second man, who had followed his companion up on to the fo'c'sle head. "Come in, b'y, an' get ter yer bunk."

"Right!" called Nuzzie, and commenced to coil up his line. It was evident that he had no thought of disobeying. He came in off the spar and went past them without a word, on the way to turn in.

They, on their part, went down slowly off the fo'c'sle head, and resumed their walk fore and aft along the lee side of the main deck.

II.

"I RECKON, Zeph," said the man who sat upon the hatch and smoked—"I reckon as Skipper Abe's 'bout right. We've made a trifle o' money outer the ole 'ooker, an' we don't get no younger."

"Aye, thet's so, right 'nuff," returned the man who sat beside him, working at the stropping of a block.

"An' it's 'bout time we got inter the use o' bein' ashore," went on the first man, who was named Job.

Zeph gripped the block between his knees, and fumbled in his hip pocket for a plug. He bit off a chew and replaced the plug.

"Seems cur'ous this is ther last trip, w'en yer comes ter think uv it," he remarked, chewing steadily, his chin resting on his hand.

Job took two or three deep draws at his pipe before he spoke.

"Reckon it had ter come sumtime," he said at length. "I've a purty leetle place in me mind w'ere I'm goin' ter lie up. 'Ave yer thought erbout it, Zeph?"

The man who held the block between his knees shook his head and stared away moodily over the sea.

"Dunno, Job, as I know what I'll do w'en ther old 'ooker's sold," he muttered. "Sence M'ria went, I don't seem nohow ter care 'bout bein' 'shore."

"I never 'ad no wife," said Job, pressing down the burning tobacco in the bowl of his pipe. "I reckon seafarin' men don't ought ter have no wives."

"Thet's right 'nuff, Job, fer yew. Each man ter 'is taste. I wer' tur'ble fond uv M'ria——" He broke off short and continued to stare out over the sea.

"I've allus thought I'd like ter settle down on er farm 'o me own. I guess the money I've arned'll do the trick," said Job.

Zeph made no reply, and for a time they sat there, neither speaking. Presently, from the door of the fo'c'sle on the starboard side, two figures emerged. They were also of the "watch below." If anything, they seemed older than the rest of those about the decks—their beards, white save for the stain of tobacco juice, came nearly to their waists. For the rest, they had been big, vigorous men, but were now sorely bent by the burden of their years. They came aft, walking slowly. As they came opposite to the main hatch, Job looked up and spoke.

"Say, Nehemiah, thar's Zeph here's been thinkin' 'bout M'ria, an' I ain't been able ter peek 'im up nohow."

The smaller of the two new-comers shook his head slowly.

"We hev oor trubbles," he said—"we hev oor trubbles. I hed mine w'en I lost my datter's gel. I wor powerful took wi' that gel, she wor that winsome; but it wor like ter be—it wor like to be—an' Zeph's hed his trubble sence then."

"M'ria wer' a good wife ter me, she wer'," said Zeph, speaking slowly; "an' now th' old 'ooker's goin', I'm feared as I'll find it mighty lonesome ashore yon." And he waved his hand as though suggesting vaguely that the land lay anywhere beyond the starboard rail.

"Aye," remarked the second of the new-comers. "It's er weary thing tu me as th' old packet's goin'. Six-and-sixty year hev I sailed in her—six-and-sixty year!" He nodded his head mournfully and struck a match with shaky hands.

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"It's like ter be," said the smaller man—"it's like ter be."

And, with that, he and his companion moved over to the spar that lay along under the starboard bulwarks, and there seated themselves to smoke and meditate.

III.

SKIPPER ABE and Josh Matthews, the first mate, were standing together beside the rail which ran across the break of the poop. As with the rest of the men of the *Shamraken*, their age had come upon them, and the snows of eternity rested upon their beards and hair.

Skipper Abe was speaking.

"It's harder'n I'd thought," he said, and looked away from the mate, staring hard along the worn, white-scoured decks.

"Dunno w'at I'll du, Abe, w'en she's gone," returned the old mate. "She's been a 'ome fer us these sixty years an' more." He knocked out the old tobacco from his pipe as he spoke, and began to cut a bowlful of fresh.

"It's them durned freights!" exclaimed the skipper. "We're jest losin' money every trip. It's them steam-packets as hes knocked us out."

He sighed wearily and bit tenderly at his plug.

"She's been a mighty comfortable ship," muttered Josh, in soliloquy. "An' sence thet b'y o' mine went, I sumhow thinks less o' goin' ashore'n I used ter. I ain't no folk left on all thar arth."

He came to an end, and began with his old, trembling fingers to fill his pipe.

Skipper Abe said nothing—he appeared to be occupied with his own thoughts. He was leaning over the rail across the break of the poop, and chewing steadily. Presently he straightened himself up and walked over to leeward. He expectorated, after which he stood there for a few moments, taking a short look round—the result of half a century of habit. Abruptly he sung out to the mate.

"W'at d'yer make outer it?" he queried, after they had stood a while peering.

"Dunno, Abe, less'n it's some sort o' mist riz up by ther 'eat."

Skipper Abe shook his head, but, having nothing better to suggest, held his peace for a while.

Presently Josh spoke again—

"Mighty cur'us, Abe. These are strange parts."

Skipper Abe nodded his assent, and continued to stare at that which had come into sight upon the lee bow. To them, as they looked, it seemed that a great wall of rose-coloured mist was rising towards the zenith. It showed nearly ahead, and at first had seemed no more than a bright cloud upon the horizon, but already had reached a great way into the air, and the upper edge had taken on wondrous flame-tints.

"It's powerful nice-lookin'," said Josh. "I've allus 'eard as things was diff'rent out'n these parts."

Presently, as the *Shamraken* drew near to the mist, it appeared to those aboard that it filled all the sky ahead of them, being spread out now far on their bow. And so in a while they entered into it, and at once the aspect of all things was changed, the mist, in great rosy wreaths, floating all about them, seeming to soften and beautify every rope and spar, so that the old ship had become, as it were, a fairy craft in an unknown world.

"Never seen nothin' like it, Abe—nothin'," said Josh. "Aye, but it's fine—it's fine! Like's ef we'd run inter ther sunset."

"I'm mazed—just mazed!" exclaimed Skipper Abe, "but I'm 'gree'ble as it's purty, mighty purty."

For a further while the two old fellows stood without speech, just gazing and gazing. With their entering into the mist, they had come into a greater quietness than had been theirs out upon the open sea. It was as though the mist muffled and toned down the creak, creak of the spars and gear, and the big, foamless seas that swept past them seemed to have lost something of their harsh whispering roar of greeting.

"Sort o' unarthly, Abe," said Josh later, and speaking but little above a whisper. "Like as ef yew was in church."

"Aye," replied Skipper Abe. "It don't seem nat'rel."

"Shouldn't think as 'eaven was all thet diff'rent," whispered Josh. And Skipper Abe said nothing in contradiction.

IV.

SOME time later the wind began to fail, and it was decided that, when eight bells was struck, all hands should set the main t'-gallant. Presently, Nuzzie having been called—for he was the only one aboard who had turned in—eight bells went, and all hands put aside their pipes and prepared to tail on to the halyards; yet no one of them made to go up to loose the sail. That was the "b'y's" job, and Nuzzie was a little late in coming

out on deck. When, in a minute, he appeared, Skipper Abe spoke sternly to him.

"Up, now, b'y, an' loose thet sail. D'y think to let er grown man dew such-like work? Shame on yew!"

And Nuzzie, the grey-bearded "b'y" of five-and-fifty years, went aloft humbly, as he was bidden.

Five minutes later he sung out that all was ready for hoisting, and the string of ancient ones took a strain on the halyards. Then Nehemiah, being the chaunty man, struck up in his shrill quaver—

"Thar wor an ole farmer up Yorkshire way."

And the shrill piping of the ancient throats took up the refrain—

"Wi' me aye, aye, blow thar lan' down!"

Nehemiah caught up the story—

"'E 'ad'n ole wife, 'n' 'e wished 'er away."

Then—

"Give us some time ter blow thar lan' down!"

came the quavering chorus of old voices.

"Oh, thar Divvel come to 'im one day at thar plough,"

continued old Nehemiah, and the crowd of ancients followed up with the refrain—

"Wi' me aye, aye, blow thar lan' down!"

Then—

"I've comed fer th' old woman, I mun 'ave 'er now,"

sang Nehemiah, and again the refrain—

"Give us some time ter blow thar lan' down!"

shrilled out.

And so on to the last couple of stanzas. And all about them, as they chanted, was that extraordinary rose-tinted mist, while above, blent into a marvellous radiance of flame colour, as though just a little higher than their mast-heads, the sky was one red ocean of silent fire.

"Thar wor three leetle divvels chained up ter the wall,"

sang Nehemiah shrilly.

"Wi' me aye, aye, blow thar lan' down!"

came the piping chorus.

"She tuk off 'er clog, 'n' she walloped 'em all,"

chanted old Nehemiah, and again followed the wheezy, age-old refrain.

"These three leetle divvels for marcy did bawl,"

quavered Nehemiah, cocking one eye upward to see whether the yard were nearly mast-headed.

"Wi' me aye, aye, blow thar lan' down!"

came the chorus.

"Chuck out this ole hag, or she'll mur——".

"Belay!" sung out Josh, cutting across the old sea-song with the sharp command. The chaunty had ceased with the first note of the mate's voice, and a couple of minutes later the ropes were coiled up, and the old fellows back to their occupations.

It is true that eight bells had gone, and that the watch was supposed to be changed, and changed it was so far as the wheel and look-out were concerned, but otherwise little enough difference did it make to those sleep-proof ancients. The only change visible in those about the deck was that those who had previously only smoked, now smoked and worked, while those who had hitherto worked and smoked, now only smoked. Thus matters went on in all amity, while the old *Shamraken* passed onward like a rose-tinted shadow through the shining mist, and only the great, silent, lazy seas that came at her out from the enshrouding redness seemed aware that she was anything more than the shadow she appeared.

Presently Zeph sung out to Nuzzie to get their tea from the galley, and so, in a little, the watch below were making their evening meal. They ate it as they sat upon the hatch or spar, as the chance might be, and, as they ate, they talked with their mates of the watch on deck upon the matter of the shining mist into which they had plunged. It was obvious, from their talk, that the extraordinary phenomenon had impressed them vastly, and all the superstition in them seemed to have been waked to fuller life. Zeph, indeed, made no bones of declaring his belief that they were nigh to something more than earthly. He said that he had a feeling that M'ria was somewhere near to him.

"Meanin' to say as we've come purty near ter 'eaven?" said Nehemiah, who was busy thrumming a paunch mat for chafing gear.

"Dunno," replied Zeph; "but"—making a gesture towards the hidden sky—"yew'll 'low as it's mighty wonnerful, 'n' I guess ef 'tis 'eaven, thar's some uv us as is growin' powerful wearied uv arth. I guess I'm feelin' peeky fer a sight uv M'ria."

Nehemiah nodded his head slowly, and the nod seemed to run round the group of white-haired ancients.

"Reckon my datter's gel 'll be thar," he said, after a space of pondering. "Be s'prisin' ef she 'n' M'ria 'd made et up ter know one another."

"M'ria wer' great on makin' friends," remarked Zeph meditatively, "an' gels was awful friendly wi' 'er. Seemed es she hed er power thet way."

"I never 'ad no wife," said Job at this

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"The rest of the old men followed his example."

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point, somewhat irrelevantly. It was a fact of which he was proud, and he made a frequent boast of it.

"Thet's naught ter cocker thysel' on, lad," exclaimed one of the white-beards who, until this time, had been silent. "Thou'lt find less folk in heaven t' greet thee."

"Thet's trewth, sure 'nuff, Jock," assented Nehemiah, and fixed a stern look on Job; whereat Job retired into silence.

Presently, at three bells, Josh came along and told them to put away their work for the day.

V.

THE second dog-watch came, and Nehemiah and the rest of his side made their tea out upon the main hatch along with their mates. When this was finished, as though by common agreement, they went every one and sat themselves upon the pinrail running along under the t'-gallant bulwarks; there, with their elbows upon the rail, they faced outward to gaze their full at the mystery of colour which had wrapped them about. From time to time a pipe would be removed and some slowly-evolved thought given an utterance.

Eight bells came and went; but, save for the changing of the wheel and look-out, none moved from his place.

Nine o'clock, and the night came down upon the sea; but to those within the mist the only result was a deepening of the rose colour into an intense red which seemed to shine with a light of its own creating. Above them the sky seemed to be one vast blaze of blood-tinted flame.

"Piller uv cloud by day, 'n' er piller uv fire by night," muttered Zeph to Nehemiah, who crouched near.

"I reckon 's them's Bible words," said Nehemiah.

"Dunno," replied Zeph; "but them's thar very words as I heerd Passon Myles a-sayin' w'en thar timber wor afire down our way. 'Twer' mostly smoke 'n daylight, but et tarned ter 'n etarnal fire w'en thar night comed."

At four bells the wheel and look-out were relieved, and a little later Josh and Skipper Abe came down on to the main deck.

"Tur'ble queer," said Skipper Abe, with an affectation of indifference.

"Aye, 'tes, sure," said Nehemiah.

And after that the two old men sat among the others and watched.

At five bells—half-past ten—there was a murmur from those who sat nearest to the bows, and a cry from the man on the look-out. At that the attention of all was turned to a point nearly right ahead. At the particular spot the mist seemed to be glowing with a curious, unearthly red brilliance, and a minute later there burst upon their vision a vast arch formed of blazing red clouds. At the sight, each and every one cried out their amazement, and immediately began to run towards the fo'c'sle head. Here they congregated in a clump, the skipper and the mate among them. The arch appeared now to extend its arc far beyond either bow, so that the ship was heading to pass right beneath it.

"'Tis 'eaven, fer sure!" murmured Josh to himself. But Zeph heard him.

"Reckon 's them's ther gates uv glory thet M'ria was allus talkin' 'bout," he replied.

"Guess I'll see thet b'y er mine in er little," muttered Josh; and he craned forward, his eyes very bright and eager.

All about the ship was a great quietness. The wind was no more now than a light, steady breath upon the port quarter; but from right ahead, as though issuing from the mouth of the radiant arch, the long-backed, foamless seas rolled up black and oily.

Suddenly, amid the silence, there came a low musical note, rising and falling like the moan of a distant æolian harp. The sound appeared to come from the direction of the arch, and the surrounding mist seemed to catch it up and send it sobbing and sobbing in low echoes away into the redness far beyond sight.

"They'm singin'!" cried Zeph. "M'ria wer' allus tur'ble fond uv singin'. Hark ter——"

"'Sh!" interrupted Josh. "Thet's my b'y!" His shrill old voice had risen almost to a scream.

"It's wunnerful, wunnerful—just mazin'!" exclaimed Skipper Abe.

Zeph had gone a little forrad of the crowd. He was shading his eyes with his hands, and staring intently, his expression denoting the most intense excitement.

"B'lieve I see 'er—b'lieve I see 'er!" he was muttering to himself over and over again.

Behind him two of the old men were steadying Nehemiah, who felt, as he put it, "a bit mazy at thar thought o' seein' thet gel."

Away aft, Nuzzio, the "b'y," was at the wheel. He had heard the moaning, but,

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being no more than a boy, it must be supposed that he knew nothing of the *nearness* of the next world, which was so evident to the men, his masters.

A matter of some minutes passed, and Job, who had in mind that farm upon which he had set his heart, ventured to suggest that heaven was less near than his mates supposed; but no one seemed to hear him, and he subsided into silence.

It was the better part of an hour later, and near to midnight, when a murmur among the watchers announced that a fresh matter had come to sight. They were yet a great way off from the arch, but still the thing showed clearly—a prodigious umbel of a deep, burning red; but the crest of it was black, save for the very apex, which shone with an angry red glitter.

"Thar throne uv God!" cried out Zeph in a loud voice, and went down upon his knees. The rest of the old men followed his example, and even old Nehemiah made a great effort to get to that position.

"Simly we'm a'most 'n 'eaven," he muttered huskily.

Skipper Abe got to his feet with an abrupt movement. He had never heard of that extraordinary electrical phenomenon, seen once, perhaps, in a hundred years, the "fiery tempest," which precedes certain great cyclonic storms; but his experienced eye had suddenly discovered that the red-shining umbel was truly a low, whirling water-hill reflecting the red light. He had no theoretical knowledge to tell him that the thing was produced by an enormous air-vortex, but he had often seen a water-spout form. Yet he was still undecided. It was all so beyond him, though certainly that monstrous gyrating hill of water, sending out a reflected glitter of burning red, appealed to him as having no place in his ideas of heaven. And then, even as he hesitated, for the last time came the æolian-harp-like note of the coming cyclone. As the sound thrilled strangely upon their ears, the old men looked at one another with bewildered eyes.

"Reck'n thet's sure the harps playin'," whispered Zeph. "Guess we're on'y mis'rable sinners."

The harp-note rose abruptly into the bellow of the approaching storm.

The next instant the breath of the cyclone was in their throats, and the *Shamraken*, homeward-bounder, passed in through the everlasting portals.

APPLES AT DROMINAGH.

WISHED I aright your charms to praise,
I would not sing you, in my lays,
With other common fruit, that weighs
Its burden to the ground.
For you belong to other times,
To other ways, to other climes.
You might have ripened to the chimes
Of bells in Tudor days,
Vibrating to the sound.

Your rounded cheeks are painted, each
In hues of apricot and peach.
Ah, who would stretch his hand and reach
Such beauty from its place?
Nay, long 'midst beds of hollyhocks,
Bordered around with emerald box,
Betwixt the dahlias and the stocks,
By Lough Derg's distant beach—
The whole complete, to those who know,
A picture of the long ago,
May you the garden grace.

EILY ESMONDE.

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THE LETTER.

By ELIZABETH CLEMENT.

" RE you really going? I am sorry. Still, I should never have known you. Good-bye!"

That was all. No signature—no initial even.

Godfrey Thorne scanned the pretty girlish writing. It was totally unfamiliar to him.

He ran over in his mind his list of acquaintances. This did not take long. Almost the sole and only reason Godfrey Thorne was leaving Friesden—where he acted as steward on Lord Bransom's estate—lay in the fact that neither in number nor in point of interest did the inhabitants of that small village suffice to detain him. For Godfrey was a convivial soul.

The son of a well-to-do solicitor, he had been a popular man in his own native town up to the time when, training and inclination alike influencing him, he had accepted the offer proposed to him by one of his father's most wealthy clients. And here, in Friesden, Godfrey was popular—too popular, indeed. For eligible bachelors must, of necessity, be hunted out and tracked to their lairs in communities where daughters are many and sons are few.

And Godfrey Thorne was not the man to object. But after a period of twelve months, during which he enjoyed to the full the hockey matches, the tennis matches, the picnics, the concerts, the social evenings—each and all arranged for his especial benefit—then surfeit overtook him. He was, frankly, bored.

A man of social instincts, he was also a man of nice taste and intelligence, and both of these attributes bid fair to become atrophied by disuse in Friesden.

Godfrey, thinking on these things, sighed, then turned again to contemplation of the anonymous letter and the fair unknown.

"Let me see. There are Darrell's daughters." Darrell was the country doctor. "Nice girls, both of 'em, but a little goes a long way, and—um—ah—besides"—looking at the small note again—"'I should never have known you'—they *do* know me. Then there's the Stukely brood." Mr. Stukely was a retired timber merchant. "Worthy, worthy—very worthy. And Miss Glenister's niece—a nice little thing, but timid as a hare. I hate timid women. Then there's the Vicar's Gladys. And that's the whole jolly lot!"

Godfrey set the letter up against a brilliant vase on the mantelpiece of the sitting-room of his lodgings, frowning at the graceful writing the while. With hands thrust deep in his trousers' pockets, he summoned before him in spirit the forms of those who might have, but who as certainly had not, written the mysterious missive.

"No, I know 'em all too well—at least, the Darrells and the Stukely brood. And I've spoken to that little Glenister girl several times. And the Vicar's pet lamb's *quite* out of the running. Oh, dash it all, it's some silly fool's trick!"

He crumpled the letter up and made as if to throw it on the fire, but, on a sudden impulse, straightened it out again and read it over to himself once more.

"'Are you really going? I am sorry. Still, I should never have known you. Good-bye!'"

"Sounds a bit hopeless," commented Godfrey. "But wherefore?"—running his fingers in puzzled fashion through his smooth, immaculately-parted hair. Recollecting himself almost immediately, he carefully repaired the devastation by the aid of the mirror above, scanning his reflection anxiously the while.

There was no denying that the little letter pleased him. Many and loud were the outcries over his intended departure from Friesden. These, Godfrey had fully anticipated, being a young man with no false ideas of his own merit. But the little white note found no place in his calculations. The better its welcome, therefore. *Some* unknown person had approved of him from afar. So much was evident. Very good; that was as it should be. Godfrey's face wore a satisfied look as he placed the tiny missive carefully in his pocket-book.

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"Decent writer, too. Must be well-bred. That is"—remembering suddenly his own disreputable caligraphy—"not necessarily so, of course." Then Godfrey Thorne went out to his duties, and straightway remembered the letter no more.

A week later, while superintending work on the Friesden estate, Godfrey was waylaid by his patron and employer, Lord Bransom. Lord Bransom, it appeared, was very well satisfied with his estate agent, and himself made a very personal request that Godfrey would reconsider his intention of departure. It was peculiar that, while Lord Bransom was thus engaged, Godfrey should have a sudden remembrance of the little white note pressing so closely against his heart; but so, indeed, it was.

Now, it would be too much to say that this remembrance in any way influenced the young man's mind, though Lord Bransom's generous proposals may have done. But certain it is that, when Godfrey Thorne finally settled to remain at Friesden, he took a most solemn vow to discover the identity of the writer of that little note, as any other man in his circumstances would have done.

* * * * *

The Stukelys were having "an evening," a form of entertainment in which they indulged during the winter months. It implied "cards" for the sedate and worldly-minded, "dancing and games" for the robust and frivolous-hearted, with refreshment for one and all *ad lib.*, and "so home," as the good Pepys hath it.

The hero of the Stukely evening—to wit, Godfrey Thorne—was late in arriving. Business at a distance, and, later, a refractory collar-stud, had conspired to delay his appearance; and when at last he entered the large "library" at Brook Hall—dedicated to "evenings" only—the innocent and healthy game of "Musical Chairs" was in full progress.

He crossed over unnoticed, therefore, to the piano, where Mary Glenister, as was her wont on these occasions, dispensed such abrupt music as the exigencies required. Mary did not look up nor offer any greeting at Godfrey's approach, and he stood watching her agile fingers until the musical spasm ended. She then gave him a conventional and slightly perfunctory greeting, putting her fingers back again on the keys almost immediately.

"Pity she's so shy," inwardly commented Godfrey. "Got very decent eyelashes—and eyes, too, I dare say, if she'd let anyone see them."

Aloud, he gracefully offered himself as a substitute at the piano, so that Mary might join in the general struggle that was taking place. But Mary Glenister refused—hastily, rudely even, Godfrey, unaccustomed to abruptness, thought.

"You do not care for 'Musical Chairs'?" he hazarded politely, not because he was interested, but for the sake of saying something.

"I object to being knocked down," replied Mary Glenister, with her head downcast still over the piano.

Godfrey was unready with a reply, being quite unprepared for such an answer. It irritated him somehow. "Superior, then, as well as shy," he commented again. "How ghastly!"

Overcome by the combination, he was about to move slowly away, when Mary's eyes, lifted suddenly, met his, and Godfrey turned expectant.

"I beg your pardon—you spoke?" he said indecisively, as Mary seemed engrossed again in her music. But the young girl merely shook her head. Her attention was quite riveted on the keys. And Godfrey walked away rather swiftly.

"I could have sworn she spoke," he said to himself rather crossly, "and, anyway, what's she mean by laughing like that? I'll *swear* she was laughing."

He turned resentfully, as if to verify the fact, but there was only Mary's slender back to be seen; and he pursued his way again rather more slowly.

"But I didn't know her eyes were like that," he murmured.

Then Mrs. Stukely came hurrying towards him from the inner room, where the sedate were playing whist.

"Oh, here you are, Mr. Thorne! I was afraid you weren't coming. How late you are! Yes, yes, just so! I *quite* understand"—without listening to his excuses. "I'm *so* glad you were able to get here. Now, what are you going to do? Will you come and take a hand at whist, or join the merry party here?"

Godfrey viewed with some distaste the scuffle for chairs going on, and felt himself, despite his late comment, somewhat in sympathy with Mary Glenister's attitude. His glance strayed unconsciously to the piano.

"Yes, it is a shame!" declared Mrs. Stukely volubly, following his glance.

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"That poor girl! She must be worn out. But she is always *so* willing. I almost wish she were not quite so willing. Oh, a nice girl—a very nice girl—but *so* quiet. *Quite* different to my dear girls. Now, they're *full* of fun."

Godfrey looked somewhat doubtfully at the slight figure at the piano. He had not altogether forgotten Mary's eyes. Perhaps she was not so entirely devoid of humour as Mrs. Stukely supposed. He made a sudden resolve.

"I can vamp a bit," he said; "I'm rather fond of it. Perhaps——"

"Oh, can you? Oh, will you? That will be *most* kind of you, Mr. Thorne, if you're *sure* you don't mind."

Sauntering once again in the direction of the piano after Mrs. Stukely had bustled off, Godfrey awaited the usual spasmodic break in the melody that Mary Glenister was playing. When it came, taking advantage of the general confusion and *mêlée* that invariably and immediately followed, he advanced swiftly, and, ere Mary was conscious of his presence, had swung her lightly from her seat and was himself playing imperturbably before she had time to protest or utter a word.

If he had expected remonstrance of any kind, he was disappointed, for Mary Glenister, deprived of her task, retreated at once to the privacy of the card-room. Later, when one of the more good-natured of the Stukely brood was beating the boisterous music of "The Gaiety Lancers" out of the robust piano, Godfrey sought out Mary for his partner.

Looking down at her, Godfrey could not but notice the contrast she presented to the rest of the girls in the room. Pale-complexioned and slenderly fashioned, though by no means delicate-looking, Mary Glenister reminded him of a stray exotic in a garden of full-blown roses.

The Stukelys were popularly spoken of as "fine girls," so, too, the doctor's daughters. Large-limbed and broad-shouldered these latter, their countenances betrayed too clearly, under the hard gas-light, where sun and wind had vied for predominance. At least, so thought Godfrey now. There *had* been a time when he thought differently.

There could be no doubt whatever that Mary Glenister enjoyed dancing. Godfrey Thorne looked at her in some surprise. There was a slight flush beneath her usually pale skin, and her dark eyes were glowing like warm stars. She was as light in his arms as a graceful child.

"And, after all, she *is* nothing but a child," Godfrey decided, as Mary swung round to him once again in the last figure of the lancers.

This quite fresh view of Mary Glenister received further confirmation in Godfrey's eyes when, the dance being ended, the two, in company with other couples, made their way to the refreshment room.

Here Mary, seated soberly before the sandwiches, regained all her wonted serenity of demeanour and that quietness of manner which had procured for her the reputation of shyness among those who knew her least.

The young man and girl talked on various topics, or rather Godfrey talked and Mary answered when occasion or necessity demanded. Godfrey had the sensation that she was not quite at her ease with him. Attributing this diffidence to the youthfulness that had made itself apparent so lately, he was at considerable pains to try and dispel it, for he was a good-hearted fellow. He talked now of one thing, now of another; and Mary listened politely enough, putting a question only when Godfrey spoke of certain plans for the future.

"But you are leaving Friesden, Mr. Thorne, are you not?" she said, a faint surprise in her voice.

It was Godfrey's turn to look surprised. "Is it possible," he said, "that you have remained unenlightened? But perhaps you have been away?" he added inquiringly. "Not? I can't account for it, then, Miss Glenister, for all Friesden people knew my intentions long before I knew them myself. Yes, I have changed my mind. A man may do that, you know, although I believe it is as yet an unwritten law. So I am staying on in Friesden—for a time, at any rate," he added half absently, gazing with an intentness of which he was unaware into Mary's eyes.

For memory had suddenly asserted itself, and recollection had come upon him of the strange little letter he always carried with him. What had brought it to his remembrance just then? Godfrey wondered rather idly, and was reflecting that his vow concerning it had been registered in word only, when an exclamation from Mary roused him sharply from his reverie.

"Oh, don't," she said distressfully—"*don't* stare at me so!"

Godfrey withdrew his gaze hurriedly, and apologised profusely. His conscience was

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void of offence, for, being engrossed in meditation, he was wholly unaware of the fact that his gaze had been fixed earnestly on Mary Glenister's face.

"Pray forgive my rudeness," he said; "it was quite unintentional, I assure you."

To himself, he said, "What a queer girl! Must be extraordinarily sensitive," noting surreptitiously Mary's discomposure. "Perhaps, though"—with enlightened memory—"it's only girlish shyness, after all."

"Girlish shyness," or whatever it may have been, Mary had regained her self-control almost before Godfrey had begun to wonder at the loss of it. She stood up before him now, with mocking laughter in her dark eyes, reading aloud Godfrey's very thought, rather to his discomfiture.

"I am not mad, most noble Festus," she said, with intentional malice, "but, oh"—her voice was full of exaggerated pathos—"oh, so painfully shy!"

Then, with a light laugh and a mischievous glint in her eyes, Mary had gone before Godfrey, amazed at her sudden change of front, could find any words. And he saw her no more that evening.

* * * * *

There had been Glenisters in Friesden since the memory of man. Miss Matilda Glenister and her niece Mary were the only living representatives, however. Mary's parents had both died in India, and the orphaned child, living and thriving, contrary to all expectations, had been dispatched with all possible speed to England, there to be placed under Miss Matilda Glenister's care.

No one in Friesden knew Mary Glenister well, nor, be it added, did they very much want to. She seemed to have little in common with the Friesden girls. A being apart, she was with them, but not of them. She was always invited to assist in any gaiety going forward. This was due partly to her name—the Glenisters being of good family—and partly to her always obliging readiness to serve. But because Mary Glenister's tastes and theirs were dissimilar, Friesden people voted her on all hands as "quiet and queer."

Mary's tastes were only apparent to the country at large, in that she seemed to find amusement in taking lengthy rambles with only Miss Matilda's big collie, Boy, as companion, or in her constant journeyings to Winfield—a small country town some three or four miles distant, which boasted a lending library—for the purpose of exchanging books.

Mary was returning from one of these expeditions to Winfield in the late afternoon of a wintry day. She had delayed longer than was her wont in the little town, and the dusk lay all around her, added to which a thick fog had suddenly fallen. But she had no fear of missing her way, for the road to Friesden lay straight ahead; nor did she fear the gathering darkness, for her faithful friend and well-loved companion, Boy, was ever at her side.

Godfrey Thorne was out in the fog, too, walking more carefully than Mary, for he was not so sure of his ground. He had been superintending the felling of some trees in a distant wood on Lord Bransom's estate, and was returning to his lodgings at the farther end of Friesden, rather wearied in body and, it must be owned, somewhat irritable in mind. Pat, Godfrey's Irish terrier, following close after, feeling the contagion, partook largely of his master's sensations.

Mary Glenister, entering into Friesden as Godfrey Thorne neared his lodgings, felt, rather than saw, the approaching forms of man and dog through the fog.

But Godfrey, immersed in gloom without and within, felt and saw nothing until he came into collision with what appeared to be a huge hairy monster; and before he could discover what the "thing" might be, Pat, quicker than his master, had bounded forward and was fighting tooth and nail with Mary's collie at Godfrey's very feet.

Godfrey quickly rose to the occasion, and called his dog off with many a hard name, unwitting that Mary Glenister was but a few yards distant.

Pat, however, was far too interested to heed his master's voice, and Godfrey had to turn and twist quite aimlessly in the foggy darkness, until he could get a grip on the slippery dog's collar. This naturally did not tend to improve Godfrey's irritation, and he was about to call rather sharply on the collie's owner to "Just take your dog, will you?" when Mary stepped forward, and before Godfrey could finish his sentence, she had Boy firmly by the collar and was leading him growling away.

Godfrey looked in some surprise after her retreating form. Indistinctly he had the consciousness that some person was near while he had struggled to regain possession of his animal, but whether that person were man, woman, or child, he had not the faintest notion, and even now he did not recognise Mary Glenister's figure.

He saw her dim outline vanish in the fog,

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but not until the darkness had covered Mary did the thought strike him that possibly his conduct left something to be desired; and on the impulse of the moment he called out an apology for his dog Pat.

But only a light laugh came back to him through the misty darkness. And Godfrey went on his way, wondering where on earth he could have heard that laugh before. It sounded vaguely familiar, but memory defied him.

Instinctively his hand moved to the breast-pocket of his coat, where the little, strange white letter still lay. This unknown girl with the silvery laugh, who had come suddenly upon him out of the darkness, might she not be the writer of the letter?

And then all at once it came. "Mary Glenister, by all that's holy!" he exclaimed aloud. Pat looked up in astonishment at hearing his master speak so earnestly. "To think I never knew it! I'm an ass, anyway." Godfrey was speaking to himself now. Such things were not for dogs or men to hear.

"And I always thought her timid! Didn't seem very timid to-night, I must say. Put her hands on that great beast in a moment. Dare say he's fond of her, but, Jove, not every girl would have risked it. And I thought her timid! What a fool!"

Himself Godfrey meant, not Mary Glenister. She seemed to assume another aspect in his eyes, apart from the one he had formed of her character on the Stukely "evening."

"You and I'll have to apologise, Pat, old boy," said Godfrey, as he slipped his latch-key through the front door of his lodgings, and stooped to give the Irish terrier a caress which certain past circumstances hardly seemed to warrant.

Later, fed and warmed, and stretched at his ease by the hearth, Godfrey decided to make a personal call at the Red House on the morrow. Common politeness alone, it seemed to him, demanded it.

This decision still holding good despite eight hours' slumber, Godfrey, in the afternoon of the day following, arrayed himself with care for a visit to the Red House, where resided Miss Matilda Glenister and her niece Mary.

Altogether charming he found aunt and niece—particularly the latter, perhaps. But how misleading had the girl been both in appearance and manner! Godfrey had hitherto seen but very little of Mary Glenister. One met her only on such occasions as the Stukely "evenings," or at gaieties similar. Godfrey himself remembered now that he had scarcely seen her since that particular evening of over a month ago. He realised, however, that his summing-up of Mary needed some readjustment.

A little, pale-faced thing she was, with eyes so deeply fringed and veiled that it was only now that Godfrey Thorne found leisure to discover the depths of laughter that lay in those dark eyes. Shy, he had called her, but her spontaneous gaiety was fresh as a child's. Mary Glenister pleased him. For the second time he noted it. Her gay laugh seemed to follow him long after the door of the Red House closed.

Mary's eyes, too, must have accompanied Godfrey as he journeyed home from the Red House, for he sat in his dull lodgings that evening and thought once more upon them. How blind he had been! Not only depths of laughter, but depths of sweetness lurked in those velvet pools — depths of truth. Other depths there were, too — depths to drown in, cried Godfrey to himself. How blind he had been!

The foregoing visit was only one of many that Godfrey Thorne made to the Red House. Mary was not always in on these occasions, but Miss Matilda was, and she invariably greeted the young man with gracious affability. Godfrey's visits pleased and amused the elder lady. He had a deferential air that was most soothing to one well on in middle age.

Pat and Boy had long ago made friends, thanks to Godfrey's praiseworthy efforts, and the two dogs evinced more pleasure at a chance encounter than either owner would have cared or dared to show.

These meetings were but few, however. Godfrey could have desired them oftener, but Mary seemed at times to go out of her way to avoid him. She puzzled Godfrey, at times reminding him oddly enough of some wild bird. For at some turn of the conversation she would suddenly shrink into shyness, and lose for the nonce her natural and charming freedom of speech. And these changes in her, seldom though they occurred, made Godfrey think of those days—far enough off they seemed now—when Mary was to him only a "timid little thing."

He was thinking some such thoughts as these when chance, or circumstance, rather, led him one morning by way of the Red House. It was the "spring o' the year," and Mary Glenister was picking primroses in a sheltered corner of the garden plot as Godfrey passed by.

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"Well, 'Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?'" he asked, looking over the low fence.

Mary looked up, startled at his voice. "Good morning, Mr. Thorne!"—with due emphasis on the cognomen. "I don't *remember* having given you permission to call me by my Christian name." Mary's voice was interrogatory.

"I don't, either," confessed Godfrey.

"Then——"

"Because I wanted to—want to, I mean," he added boldly, unabashed under the fire of Mary's eyes.

"And, may I ask, do you always do what you want?"

"Yes—no—not always—*yes*, in the end," said Godfrey finally, thinking many things.

For Mary appeared to him eminently desirable just then as she stood in the sunny garden, with the sweet April wind ruffling her crisp hair.

Glancing from Mary's starry eyes to the flowers she held in her hands, he was fain to quote.

"Thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor
The azured harebell, like thy veins,"

he said softly, and hoped to see the rose-flush beneath Mary's pale cheeks.

But Mary was imperturbable.

"Unhappily for your quotation," she said, "I have no harebells this morning."

"Oh, had you some last night, then?" inquired Godfrey innocently, catching her humour.

Mary laughed. "I must go," she said; "you are wasting my precious time."

"But aren't you going to give me a buttonhole first?" asked Godfrey, detaining her as she turned towards the house.

"I hadn't thought of doing so," replied Mary.

"Well, won't you think of it now?"

"There wouldn't be so many to put in water, certainly." Mary's voice was doubtful, as if arguing the benefit of this to herself. "Yes," she said at last, suddenly—"yes, I *will* think of it—indoors."

She was across the lawn before Godfrey could utter a protest; and somewhat chagrined, it must be confessed—for his experiences with the fair sex were not of this order—he went on his way.

Mary Glenister was totally different from all the girls, and they were not a few, whom Godfrey had ever met. She charmed even while she provoked him, and he was just beginning to know that this "little, pale-faced thing" was the one and only girl in Friesden—in the whole universe—for him.

He saw Mary many times after that spring morning, but always either in the presence of her aunt or of other people. And Godfrey was beginning to feel intensely annoyed with his world and with things in general—sometimes, too, with Mary, because she "hid herself so wondrously."

At last one evening he contrived to meet Mary as she was returning from one of her expeditions into Winfield. The days were lengthening now, for it was the merry month of May, and the foggy, dismal night when Godfrey had before met Mary along this road seemed far enough away. Then could only be heard the dreary drip of tears from sorrowful trees and hedges, but now the air was bright with the music of rapturous birds. Godfrey expressed somewhat of this in his first speech to Mary.

"A different world," he said, after the ordinary greetings, "since we last met along here."

Mary looked slightly puzzled, although she was not so at all. She, too, like Godfrey, felt the rapture of spring in her veins. Along the lonely road, with the bright May sun shining down on her, with the resurrection and reincarnation of tree and flower taking place even as she passed along, her ardent nature and eager, passionate heart had thrilled with the beauty of living and loving.

But beholding herself and her nature as in a glass, not darkly but clearly, Mary controlled, as was her wont, the impulses that would have betrayed her, and turned on life and Godfrey a more prosaic eye.

"Oh, you mean when the dogs fought," she rejoined, as if suddenly remembering, and Godfrey not helping her memory at all. "Yes, and by the way, where is Pat, Mr. Thorne? You haven't lost him, I hope?"

"I take better care of my friends than that, believe me, Miss Mary."

Godfrey had himself devised the difficulty of distinguishing the elder Miss Glenister from the younger.

The Red House was in sight now, and Mary turned, as they reached the gate, with an outstretched hand of farewell.

Godfrey enclosed the small fingers in his an instant.

"But aren't you going to ask me in, Miss Mary?" he said inquiringly.

"I hadn't thought of it."

"I am sure Miss Glenister would be

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pleased to see me," urged Godfrey persuasively.

"Well, if you really think so——" Mary's voice was doubtful, but she opened the garden gate and led the way up the gravel path.

"How aggravating you are! I should like to shake you," said Godfrey softly, as they stood together in the porch.

Mary's eyes were wholly mirthful. "Pray don't deny yourself any pleasure, Mr. Thorne," she answered.

Then she passed into the house and crossed the hall, Godfrey following her, and, opening the door of the "most comfortable room in the house," she stood aside to allow him to pass in.

"Here is Mr. Thorne, Aunt Matilda," she said nonchalantly to her aunt. "He asked me if he could come in, as he thought you would like to see him. I've a letter to write, aunt. Must catch the last post."

She said the last words hurriedly, as if time were just then a great object, and then closed the door carefully behind her, not without, however, first giving a glance from under her long eyelashes at the visibly irritated Godfrey.

"Little vexatious imp!" he exclaimed to himself as she vanished, and was seized with a wild desire to follow and forcibly detain her. However, he controlled this impulse, and, with as good a grace as he could muster, set himself to amuse Miss Glenister by retailing for her delectation all the latest Friesden scandal.

Miss Matilda was unfeignedly glad to welcome both Godfrey and the scandal, and did not hesitate to say so.

"You are always so interesting, Mr. Thorne," she declared, after a particularly interesting gossip. "Mary is very good, but she never seems to know the things you do," complained Miss Glenister.

And Godfrey reflected silently that, in making the latter statement, Miss Matilda had also quite inadvertently previously supplied the cause for it. Involuntarily his face softened at the thought.

"Miss Mary, I should imagine," he said, "is the last person in the world to gossip about other people's affairs."

"But, my dear young man"—Miss Matilda was slightly nettled—"there are things that one positively ought to know. Look, for example, at Violet Darrell's engagement. Now, Mary hadn't heard a word about that. Most remiss of her, I call it."

Godfrey could not restrain a smile. "But I only knew of it myself to-day, Miss Glenister," he said. "I should have been quite as ignorant as Miss Mary had I not met Miss Darrell this morning with her cousin."

Impatient of a subject which interested him not at all, Godfrey had risen to his feet to bid Miss Glenister farewell. He had lost all hope of seeing Mary again that night, and yet he lingered, absently fingering a book that lay on a small table near Mary's favourite window-seat.

It was a volume of Keats's poems, and unthinkingly Godfrey turned to the fly-leaf, looking at Mary's name written there unseeingly for a few seconds. Then the light of recognition leapt to his eyes, and he took the book closer in his hands, the better to examine the writing, while Miss Glenister still chattered on in her pleasant, aimless way.

Where had he seen this writing before? Why—*why* was it so familiar to him?

Godfrey answered Miss Matilda's questions, and responded to her conversation when necessary, but all the time his brain was occupied with the one question—

"Why did the name 'Mary Glenister' seem to look so appealingly, so *memorably*, up at him from this volume of poetry? *Why?*"

At last it came—the eve, as it were, of his departure from Friesden, and *the little white note staring down at him from the mantelpiece.* Memory had triumphed.

Involuntarily Godfrey's hand sought his pocket-book. Then he as suddenly remembered. For all his vows, the little note had suffered destruction, being remorselessly torn and flung contemptuously to the flames long, long ago.

Godfrey had had other things to think about. The letter and the unknown writer alike had long since ceased to interest him. His heart and mind had become occupied with one image only, but that one was sufficient to absorb his whole interest. Coming across the little anonymous missive one evening, while making abstruse and absurd calculations in his pocket-book, Godfrey had, without even a thought of his vow, torn the letter in pieces and surrendered it to the devouring flames.

He remembered this now almost with regret. But he needed not the letter to convince him. The writer of that and of the "Mary Glenister" confronting him from this volume of Keats's poems was one and the same person. But was that person Mary?

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"Then, laying one hand on her wrist to detain her, Godfrey spoke in low, impassioned tones."

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Godfrey's heart quickened at the thought. Intuition and a thousand memories crowding in upon him cried "Yes!"

But to know for a fact—a certainty. It seemed treason to inquire, yet he must—he *would* know.

He turned to Miss Glenister with the book open in his hands. "Your niece is a beautiful writer, Miss Glenister," he said, making his voice as casual as he could, and striving to control the throb in his throat.

Miss Matilda glanced indifferently at Mary's written name. "Yes," she said, "she writes a pretty hand. But then all the Glenisters do, or have done; it runs in the family. Mary doesn't write so well as I did when I was her age, although, perhaps, I should not be the one to say it. But writing is quite a lost art nowadays."

Godfrey let her ramble on without hindrance, hearing little, caring less. But knowledge was his. And he hastened away from the Red House as soon as possible, to ponder on his discovery. It was overwhelming. The unknown was *known*, was *near*—was enshrined in his heart even as the little white note had once been enshrined. Even now he seemed to feel it warm against his breast, and the thought brought the hot blood surging in waves, and his fingers trembled as they sought the fastening of the garden gate.

And then he met Mary herself—Mary looking like a sprite in the gloaming of the May night—and Godfrey immediately lost his head. In utter exaltation of spirit he placed his two hands on her shoulders.

"Mary, Mary," he cried, in low tones of uplifted emotion, "*you* wrote me that letter—you!"

Mary, her face pallid, lifted up eyes like a startled deer.

"What letter?" she faltered, shrinking beneath his grasp.

"*That* letter—the sweetest letter in the whole world! Mary, Mary, will you marry me?"

Oh, fool, and blind! Surely depths of idiocy could no further go. Mary wrenched herself free.

"What *can* you mean?" she exclaimed. "You must be mad! *I* have written you no letter."

"Oh, little, little liar!" Godfrey laughed softly, but with exultation. The sound seemed to madden Mary. She took a step determinedly forward.

Godfrey's expression changed. "But, Mary, Mary——"

Mary turned on him furiously. "How dare you?" she said with blazing eyes, and a little chill struck Godfrey's heart at her tone.

"If you will but wait one minute," he said hurriedly, pleadingly. Then, laying one hand on her wrist to detain her, Godfrey spoke in low, impassioned tones. "I love you," he said rapidly—"little girl, I love you! The letter is nothing, nothing!" His voice vibrated with feeling.

But Mary was in no mood to be moved by it. "Letter—letter!" she said with excitement. "I'm sick to death of the word! What do you mean? Why should *I* write you a letter, pray? And that's why you thought you ought to ask me to marry you, I suppose." Her voice was a taunt.

Godfrey was roused. His face paled with emotion and anger.

"Before Heaven, that's a lie, Mary!" he cried vehemently. "And you know it to be a lie, too," he added almost violently.

Mary was silent a space.

"What was in the letter, then?" she compelled herself to say at last. She was trembling in every limb, but controlled herself with a great effort.

"You should know as well as I," returned Godfrey, in a curiously restrained voice, for he, too, was angry.

Mary's pale face flushed. Godfrey had unloosed his hold on her wrist, but she came close to him now, looking up into his face with brilliant eyes.

"I hate you!" she said softly. "Oh"—clasping her two hands tightly together—"*how* I hate you!"

Then she turned from him and ran like a child up the path and into the Red House.

* * * * *

Godfrey Thorne spent a wakeful, troubled night. What a fool—oh, what a fool he had been! He saw it now, lying there in the darkness, and could have kicked himself in impotent anger and distress. As the restless hours passed by, his remorse grew. It seemed to him that, in his insane and brutal folly, he had blighted a delicate flower, had killed a sensitive plant. For, notwithstanding Mary's denials, he still believed her to have written the letter; and, remembering these same brazen denials, a smile rose to his lips, despite his remorse and self-abasement. But the smile soon faded. For Mary was lost to him now. He gauged her proud, sensitive nature well. On whatever impulse she had written to him, he knew her well

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enough to understand that she would find it hard indeed to forgive his discovery of it.

"But she must—she shall forgive!" he exclaimed almost violently in the darkness, sitting up in bed in his excitement.

But he sank back almost immediately with a groan. For how to make her understand? Hardest task of all—how to snare again the frightened bird?

Pondering sombrely over these difficulties, Godfrey towards dawn fell into a troubled, broken sleep. But it was full morning before he completely awoke to the realisation of his troubles, and, as he performed his customary toilet, he experienced a sensation that was quite fresh and entirely unpleasant—it was the sensation of being heart-burdened, the sensation of enduring mental misery.

The day was a full one, fortunately for Godfrey. He had much to attend to, and he threw himself into his task of directing and supervising with more than his accustomed vigour, hoping to forget for a while his heart-sickness. There would be time enough to remember when day was done. Nevertheless, the hours seemed to drag endlessly on, and it was a relief when the dreary day drew at last to a close.

Dreary in outward aspect, indeed, it had not been, Godfrey reflected somewhat bitterly, as he turned his steps towards evening in the direction of the little village. His homeward journey lay through one of the numerous plantations on Lord Bransom's estate, and as Godfrey trod the green sward underfoot, the glancing rays of the setting sun fell athwart the fresh greenery of the beech trees overhead, making a gorgeous lacework of fiery leaves.

But Godfrey was impervious to his surroundings—nay, rather he resented Nature's beauty. "What was it Wordsworth said: 'Nature never did betray the heart that loved her'? Then why couldn't it rain?" soliloquised Godfrey gloomily enough. It would have been much more in keeping with his feelings, he thought, then laughed at the conceit that desired the whole world to weep simply because one single unit in it also wept. Besides, Godfrey reflected that it was quite probable that he didn't love Nature in the way Wordsworth meant. Just now he felt that he loved only Mary; there was room in his heart for no other idol.

And, debating thus with himself, who should Godfrey come upon suddenly but Mary herself — Mary, hatless, as was her wont on sunny days, standing with uplifted head in the middle of the path but a few yards distant! The glow of the sunset was upon her listening face and parted lips. Her whole body was bathed in colour as she stood rapt, listening to the night-songs of the happy birds in the rosy trees above her.

Godfrey, turning a corner sharply and seeing her thus, stopped short. Mary had not as yet observed him, and although the wonderful beauty of Nature had failed to touch his senses, the picture that Mary unconsciously made, inanimate, too, and as one with Nature, thrilled him. Mingled with these feelings, too, was the subconscious thought of disappointment that Mary, unlike himself, could find a happiness in the beauty of mere sights and sounds. Man is ever selfish.

Hesitating thus for some seconds, Mary, turning herself suddenly, caught sight of him, and, acting upon the first primitive impulse, with a little startled cry she fled on through the wood. And Godfrey, the instinct of the hunter strong upon him, followed hot after her. But not for long. A few breathless yards, and she lay panting and tremulous in his strong arms.

Her beautiful eyes were heavy with tears of mingled vexation and shyness, and Godfrey, feeling the quivering, childish form, soothed her tenderly.

"Don't flutter, my wild bird," he said softly. "I wouldn't hurt you for the world."

Then Mary looked up at him with eyes where tears and laughter fought.

"Oh, I did write the letter! I did—I did!" she cried. "I told a lie, Godfrey. I don't know what made me." Her earnest eagerness faltered a little.

But Godfrey trembled at her unconscious use of his name, and held the lithe body closer.

"I don't know what made me write it," went on the shy voice, gaining confidence. "I was lonely, I think, and you *did* say you were going away; you know you did"—her voice was slightly resentful now—"or I would never, *never* have done it. And it wasn't because I—because I——" Her voice faltered again and died away altogether, and the long lashes veiled the pretty eyes.

Godfrey bent over her.

"But do you now, Mary?" His voice was low and insistent. "Do you now, Mary?"

The white eyelids quivered, were raised

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for an instant, and there were her eyes even as he had dreamt to see them.

* * * * *

"And to think," said Godfrey, after an interval, "that I might have gone away, after all, and never have known you!" His voice was slightly awed, as of one from whom an unknown danger had been averted.

"The fault would have been entirely your own," replied Mary; "but never dare to say my letter prevented you going!"

"Mary, I tore that letter up weeks ago, months ago, and have hardly given it a moment's consideration since. If you are going to let the thought of that worry you—why, child, the veriest cad on the face of the earth couldn't have drawn the least hint or suggestion from it! I shall be really angry if you——"

"I won't," promised Mary, her hand over his mouth.

"I can't think where my eyes were last summer," said Godfrey, after another pause.

"You were otherwise occupied, perhaps," suggested Mary demurely.

"I was a fool," he said tersely, and looked slightly guilty.

"You wouldn't have liked me to say that, though," remarked Mary wisely.

"But how was I to know you were like this?" exclaimed Godfrey, in self-defence.

"Like what?" asked Mary innocently.

"Like this," he said, pressing his lips to her red mouth.

"But that's no answer," protested Mary, when she could speak.

"Oh, isn't it? Well, I'll tell you again, then."

"Don't be silly!" laughed Mary, pushing his face away. "But I was exactly the same in the summer, you know," she declared.

"To think of it! If I'd *only* known!" sighed Godfrey."

Mary laughed again.

"But tell me," pursued Godfrey, "what did you think about me, Mary? You must have had some idea that I was living, or you wouldn't have—— Don't pinch me, or I shall kiss you again."

"Well, I must confess," said Mary, "I didn't think you looked altogether bad—not to say criminal, you know."

It was all she could be persuaded to say, notwithstanding Godfrey's cajoleries.

"But it was very forward of you, all the same," said Godfrey teasingly, in the hope of seeing the rare colour flush her clear cheek.

He was not disappointed. But Mary was equal to the occasion.

"You forget," she said, "this is Leap Year."

RONDEAU.

AND Chloe smiles; the robin stays
His melody of morning praise,
And whistles through the poplar tall
To swallows on the garden wall,
And echo fills the sunny maze.

Wan are the lingering sunset rays;
Through the dim twilit autumn haze
The firelight glimmers in the hall,
And Chloe smiles.

I strive to lift my tired gaze
Upon the sunlight's happy blaze:
I hear the distant belfry call,
I cannot see the spire at all,
Till someone guides my blindfold ways,
And Chloe smiles.

LOIS VIDAL.

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KING OF BEASTS.

By CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS,

Author of "Kings in Exile," "Neighbours Unknown," "More Kindred of the Wild," etc.

THE water being almost as warm as milk to his naked body, and buoyant by reason of its heavy percentage of salt, Johns felt that he could keep himself afloat in it indefinitely. A swimmer strong and accomplished, he had nothing to do but keep swimming straight ahead at his leisure, till either he should chance upon land, or hunger and thirst should do for him. To be sure, there were other perils, for these tropic waters were the home of shark, saw-fish, and killer. But the unpleasant possibility of such an encounter he resolutely dismissed from his calculations as one of those hazards of the game which he could not hope to affect by taking thought.

The insane fury of the hurricane having blown itself out some hours earlier, before the wallowing hulk which had carried him went down, Johns now found himself in a comparative quiet. On the crests of the tremendous rollers there was still wind enough to whip off the foam and to lash him disconcertingly; but in the vast, rocking valleys all was delicious peace. He manœuvred cleverly to keep himself in this peace, while he rested and recovered himself from that strangling struggle in the vortex where the hulk had gone down. From time to time he drove himself head and shoulders above water, glancing about eagerly under the starlight to see if there were any others of the ship's company left alive. But thinking how hardly he himself, with all his strength and watercraft, and his forethought in stripping naked for the final ordeal, had won back to the air out of that appalling vortex, he was not surprised to find himself alone.

At first all his life-energies were absorbed in the effort to recover from that literal and material descent into hell. There was no room in him for emotion—for anything but the purpose to live. Then, as he felt himself swimming strongly, and breathing once more with comfort in the smooth, deep hollows of the sea, and looking up clear-eyed at the great stars hung low in the velvet sky, a horror of loneliness gripped him. He had touched solitude before, and gently shrunk from it. He had imagined it magnified a thousandfold, and quailed at the vision. But now, for the first time, he knew it; and for a moment it was as if a gauntlet of ice had cupped itself stealthily under his heart.

It seemed to him that if he had had a plank or a spar, a bit of railing to lay his hand on, or if he had retained some tiniest rag of a garment, the solitude would have been less monstrous. But he was just one naked spark of human life amid the immeasurable, endless succession of the seas, under the still sky. The dead seemed less unfriended, swaying together blindly and silently in those unimaginable depths beneath him.

Most men in his situation would have thrown up their arms and gone down, cowed by the thought that they had the whole ocean for adversary. But to give up was not in the breed of this man Johns. It was not even, for the fraction of a second, a conscious impulse. He could not imagine himself giving up a battle, however hopeless, as long as a single faculty was left him with which to give expression to his will. His doctrine was that the time for a man to give in is not till he's quite dead and knows it.

The question to which he now set his reviving faculties was the direction in which he should swim. The night was still young, the long-battered hulk having gone down about two hours after sunset. Coolly weighing all the probabilities—a vague enough business, seeing that for two days at least no one on the ship had had any sure notion as to their latitude or longitude—he made up his mind to swim due west. That course seemed to offer him the best hope of making land—a fair enough hope, indeed, whatever direction he might take in this sea of a myriad islands. The prime essential was to take one course and stick to it, lest he should wear out his energies by swimming

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in a circle. He had the stars to shape his course by; and being a roving journalist by profession, and his head stuffed with diversified, though not always exact, knowledge, he knew his stars well enough for the purpose. His great hope was to make land before full day—before the sun, blazing down upon him from a sky of brass, should set his brains seething in his unsheltered skull, and drive him mad with thirst. He knew that any land he might hope to reach in these seas was bound to be a land of savage beasts or yet more savage men. But the problem of what he should do on reaching the said land was one that, with all his dogged optimism, did not seem to press for immediate solution. If ever he should be permitted to confront it, he would then give it his best attention.

With a leisurely, strength-conserving stroke, Johns swam onward on his side. As he neared the crest of each long wave, and felt the lash of wind and spindrift, he would put on a spurt and dive through the topmost smother, in order to regain as soon as possible the comparative quiet of the lower slopes. But the wind, as if satisfied with its accomplishment, was now falling rapidly, and soon even the crests ceased to give him any trouble. The gale fell to a breeze, and then very gradually died down altogether, except for an occasional panting puff, like a deep breath drawn sobbingly after a paroxysm of excitement.

As Johns swam on, the dark, heaving surfaces about him fell smooth in oily patches, which broke into swirls of milky, phosphorescent flame, seeded with star-dust, around the surging of his stroke. This intense phosphorescence of the tropic waters was a long familiar sight to him, but now, as he swam, he took note of it more minutely than ever before, merely to occupy his mind. The tiny sparks of sharp, instantaneous light appearing and disappearing in the filmy, eddying glow seemed to him like eyes, derisive and vindictive, taking observation of his course and laughing to think how it would end. Well, he cared little for their mockery, but he would disappoint their malignant expectations. Throughout the interminable night he amused himself with this fancy, till at last the stars began to pale hurriedly, and then the precipitate tropic dawn flared up along the tumbling horizon.

It flared upon a low reef scourged by breakers, some half-dozen miles away, with a fringe of palms beyond it, and a humped hill, purple-green, crouching a league or so inland.

The man gave a low laugh of exultation, changed his course to the right, and swam straight for the reef. But he swam very slowly now, husbanding his strength for the final struggle with the breakers.

When at last he came within a few hundred yards of the thundering and shattering line of breakers, now hurling their cataracts clean across the reef, he saw that a landing at this point would be impossible even for an expert surf-rider like himself. But he saw also that the land at this point seemed to be a sort of promontory thrust out into the sea upon his right. He turned yet again to the right, therefore, and swam on patiently in a line parallel with the roaring surf. After another couple of hours—the sun by this time having turned to molten brass, and forcing him to keep his head continually drenched—he rounded the promontory and came at length, as he had hoped, to a place where the surf, under the lee of the land, was less unmanageable. Selecting a massive roller whose breaking-point he thought he could calculate, he raced shoreward with its rush, keeping well behind its gathering crest, and dropping back, at the last, to avoid its shattering fall. In its shuddering collapse his feet found bottom, and, hurling himself forward, he plunged into the lagoon before the next breaker could overtake him.

A mile away, across still waters, lay a white-gold beach, ablaze in the sun, with a shallow rivulet threading its way across it.

Instantly wary, Johns swam slowly toward shore, scanning every tree and mass of jungle for sign of dangerous life. Some parakeets, chattering and screaming sociably together in the tree-tops near the brook, presently served to assure him that there were no human beings or marauding beasts astir in the immediate neighbourhood. He did not know what to expect in this unknown land—which he suspected to be some island—because he had no means of judging whether it was an outlying member of the New Guinea group or part of the Sumatran system. He knew that, if it belonged to the New Guinea group, it would have no wild animals more formidable than a pig, except, of course, snakes. If, on the other hand, this was an outpost of the Sumatran system, he knew he might expect to find here all the fiercest beasts of the Malay Peninsula. On the whole, however, he hoped for the latter alternative, for there were no wild animals on the surface of the round green earth which he dreaded as he

did the wild men of the New Guinea jungles.

Wading ashore at the mouth of the stream, Johns threw himself down and drank deeply of the sweet and pure, though almost tepid, water. Then, seeking the nearest shade, he sat down with his back to a tree and his eyes on the thickets, to rest himself and take stock of his chances. He was desperately sleepy after the all-night swim and the days of strain and suspense which had preceded it, but he was unwilling to sleep till he had done some hard thinking. Thinking, however, soon grew impossible. Finding his eyelids dropping together in spite of himself, and fantastic visions chasing through his brain between one eyewink and another, he climbed high into the tree, interlaced a couple of neighbouring branches to make him a support, and promptly and heartily fell asleep.

For some hours, through the heavy heat of midday and well on into the afternoon, he slept the heavy sleep of exhaustion, but was awakened at last by hunger and by the pains of his cramped and intolerable resting-place. He rubbed his stiffened limbs back to life, and then, recognising that this tree was well suited to be his refuge for the present, being one that he could swing himself into rapidly, he broke off a number of branches and wove himself a fairly secure platform, whereon he spread smaller branches and foliage till he had made a passable bed. This gave him a reassuring animal sense of possession. He had a lair—something standing for a home. Then he clambered to the ground and went looking for something to eat.

He soon saw that the food supply, of sorts, was not going to cause him much worry. He had no more to do than reach out of his own tree into the branches of its next neighbour to have all the ripe mangosteens that he could desire. Not a hundred paces away was a grove of wild plantains. He felt sure he would find the nourishing durian not far off, and plenty of succulent shell-fish in the waters of the lagoon. Having satisfied his hunger discreetly on mangosteens and plantains, he broke off and trimmed a slender but heavy branch to make himself a club, and then, as naked as the first man who came down out of the tree-tops to challenge the supremacy of his four-footed rivals, he emerged from the shade and strode almost haughtily down the beach to the waterside. Strong and lithe, and in perfect form, instead of being daunted by his utter nakedness and defencelessness, his spirit rose all the more resolutely to meet the perils which he knew must lie before him.

The beach he now observed to be quite liberally strewn with driftwood and wreckage. Among this, after much picking and choosing, he found a fragment with a spike in one end of it, which made a far more effective weapon than his rough branch. Finding it handy and well-balanced, he swept a challenging glance along the dense banks of foliage with all their unknown menace, then set himself to gathering the choicest shell-fish for his supper. He took them up to his tree, and there, sitting with his back against the trunk, he made a hearty meal before climbing to his retreat in the branches.

So far he had seen no sign of life but a few monkeys, many parakeets and cockatoos, and a flight of rosy flamingos. From the unrifled wreckage on the beach, much of it of a character that could not fail to interest any intelligent savages, he concluded that this neighbourhood was not inhabited or frequented by man. If it was the haunt of any of the larger beasts, he felt sure the fact would manifest itself around sunset, when they would probably come down to drink at the sweet-water stream.

For proof of the justice of his reasoning he had not long to wait. While the sunset was yet striking level through the trees, and the sky yet aglow with pale colour, there was a heavy trampling amid the undergrowth, and a herd of wild buffalo came rolling down to the brook. They were some couple of hundred yards upstream from Johns's tree, but near enough for him to recognise their type.

"If those chaps are here," he muttered discontentedly, "I'm in for leopards, and possibly even a tiger or two. I'll have to be keeping my eyes peeled."

And he made up his mind to equip himself, on the morrow, with more weapons, particularly with something in the way of a lance or spear, that he might do battle at longer range than his club would suffice for. He mused with longing on his repeating rifle and his brace of handy thirty-eights gone down with the ship. From these futile regrets he moderated his dreams to the craving for a good bow and arrows, with which he could soon supply himself if only he had a knife. But this was as vain a dream as that of the rifle and the revolvers. He pulled himself together with a little soundless laugh, squared his shoulders, examined critically his long, sinewy hands

and the muscles of his naked body, and, thrilling suddenly to the thought that he had got down to the bare bedrock of unaided manhood, he vowed he would prove himself, against all assailants, a more efficient animal than the best of them.

As the chance of the wilds would have it, he had not long to wait before putting his resolution to the test. The stream rippling beneath the tree, muddied by the visit of the buffalo, had not more than time to run clear, when a couple of small deer came down to drink at it. Wary of ambush, they sought its banks in the open, well below Johns's tree, and they drank timorously, lifting their heads alternately every other second to keep watch. For all their vigilance, they could not see the enemy which was stealthily trailing them. It was a slender, vividly-spotted ocelot, which came stealing after them as noiselessly as a shadow, keeping well behind the screen of Johns's tree. Arriving at the base of the trunk, the great cat flattened herself to the ground and peered around cautiously, apparently in doubt as to whether she was near enough to make a successful rush upon the quarry.

Before she could make up her mind, the great vigilant ears of the deer seemed to catch some sound of menace back in the jungle. For just a fraction of a second the two stood rigid, ears, eyes, and noses directed toward the sound. Then, with a bound so light that it seemed as if they were lifted by a breath, they cleared the brook and fled away down the beach. The ocelot, baring her long white teeth in her disappointment, darted up into the tree, and peered back over her tracks to see what had given her quarry the alarm. Detecting nothing, she started to climb higher, as if to secure a better view, and was confronted by the steady eyes of the man staring down upon her over the edge of his platform.

Shrinking back with a startled snarl, and ears flattened to her skull, she crouched on her branch and glared upwards into the man's eyes, But Johns did not regard an ocelot as worth taking seriously. She was nothing more to him than a superior kind of wild-cat. But he did not want her or her kind trespassing upon his tree. "Skat!" he ordered sharply, and clapped his hands. The astonished animal, with tail rigid and enlarged, dropped out of the haunted tree and scurried into the jungle.

"That's good enough for the likes of you," chuckled the man, and set himself to arrange his bed more comfortably.

As the twilight fell swiftly into a starlit dark, Johns became unable to distinguish the forms which sought the waterside. They kept close to the edge of the jungle, nothing more than indeterminate, moving shadows, which did little more than touch the water and vanish. But occasional heavy tramplings and splashings revealed to him that some of the visitors, whatever their character, were of considerable bulk. Once, some little distance back in the jungle, there was an agonised, bleating scream, followed by a brief threshing among the undergrowth, and Johns inferred that some creature of the deer or goat tribe had fallen prey to the ocelot. The sound was followed by an unseen but noisy stampede from the brookside. There fell a stillness that was intensified rather than broken by the booming of the surf on the outer reefs.

The warm, sea-scented air was like an opiate bath, and Johns now felt himself overpowered with drowsiness. He began to persuade himself that here on his platform he might safely go to sleep, in spite of all the marauding life now astir throughout the jungle. He knew well enough, at the back of his brain, that it would be madness, but he was just beginning to yield, to slip away into visions, when a honey-coloured light flooding in from sea aroused him. The moon was just rising. He stared out at it, his heart smitten with a sudden sense of infinite and eternal desolation. Then a faint sound behind him caught his ear, and he turned his head. There by the edge of the stream, his spots clear in the level light, his flat, cruel head uplifted to eye the moon, stood an enormous leopard.

Johns knew that a leopard could climb a tree as nimbly as the ocelot. Without a sound he reached for his little club, and felt the spike in the end of it to see that it was secure. He wished that he had had the forethought to provide himself with a spear. But his spirit rose confidently, and his sinews tightened, to the doubtful encounter that seemed to lie before him.

Presently the leopard began to sniff the air as if he detected a smell that puzzled him. That it was a smell which excited his hostility was plain to be seen from the flattening back of his ears and the twitching of his tail. But apparently this man-smell was not familiar to him. He crept about stealthily till he came upon the man's footprints. On the instant he stiffened into vigilant preparedness. Here was something unknown and dangerous. Very circumspectly

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"She crouched on her branch and glared upwards into the man's eyes."

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he followed the trail to the tree, sniffed at the trunk, and lifted his head to stare up among the branches.

The man looked down coolly into that pale, cruel glare.

The tree being now penetrated everywhere by the level rays, Johns knew that his light skin must make him very clearly visible to the foe. He slightly turned his head so that the moon would illuminate his face, and gazed down into the brute's uplifted eyes. Then he began to talk.

"You clear out of this!" he ordered, very slowly, syllable by syllable, in a voice of iron. "You mind your own affairs, and keep your nose out of mine!"

The beast seemed to hesitate. His eyes shifted once or twice, to return instantly to those of the man. That steady, commanding gaze told him clearly enough that here was no trembling prey, but an adversary, ready for him and unafraid. How dangerous an adversary it might be, that pale-coloured being with the unswerving eyes, he was unable to judge. It looked to be as big as himself, and it was certainly of a most remarkable and unheard-of appearance. Then the sounds it was making. They were not loud, but there was an incomprehensible menace in them. Savage and bloodthirsty as he was, the leopard was not really seeking a fight for its own sake. He was accustomed to seeing panic terror in eyes that met his. It was a victim, not an antagonist, that he was in search of. He recognised, of course, that there *were* creatures more formidable than himself. The tiger, for instance, he gave the widest possible berth to, and to the old bull buffalo he discreetly yielded way if they met in the forest trails. Could it be that this creature in the tree was also his master?

"This is my tree," continued the cold voice above him, slow word by word. "You keep yourself out of it. Get!"

There was a confidence, a decisiveness in the tones that the puzzled beast found very disconcerting. Gradually he seemed to conclude that he had no particular quarrel with this self-assured stranger staring down upon him from the branches. He turned away his head and pretended, for a few seconds, to forget the stranger's existence. Then he wheeled about and went padding off, without haste, into the jungle.

Though Johns thrilled with exultation at this significant victory, he drew a deep breath of relief when the leopard had vanished. For he knew that, with his slight weapon and his insecure foothold in the tree, the contest, had it been forced upon him, must have been a doubtful one. He realised that he must not let himself sleep except during full day. He spent the rest of the night devising schemes for making his retreat in the tree more secure, and for equipping himself with more and better weapons. Throughout the night, at intervals, others of the jungle-dwellers came down to the stream to drink, mostly varieties of the deer tribe, a few more buffalo, some small animals which he did not recognise, another ocelot or two, and once again a leopard, or, perhaps, as he concluded, the same one. About sunrise these visits came to an end. Then for a couple of hours he slept heavily.

He awoke with a start and a conviction that the leopard was climbing the tree to attack him. He gripped his club and leaned over the edge of his platform, wide awake and ready for the battle. But there was nothing in sight more threatening than a big rose-crested cockatoo, which hung head downward from a neighbouring branch, erected its gorgeous top-knot, and eyed him with a kind of solemn malevolence. He burst into laughter, and the bird flew off with an outraged squawk. Then Johns swung down alertly out of his tree, took a plunge in the salt sparkle of the lagoon, and set himself to his breakfast of plantains and mangosteens. He was content to dispense with the shell-fish for the present, promising himself that he would tackle the problem of making fire by friction after he had dealt with the more pressing ones of weapons and safe lodging.

After a deal of searching the drift-wood down the beach, he found a strip of light hand-rail attached to a support. In wrenching it free, which proved a laborious task, and bade fair to drown him in his own sweat, he split the end of it to a sharp and jagged point. He recognised the wood for a piece of ash, hard-grained and not too brittle; and he was satisfied that here was a fairly effective javelin with which to stab downward upon an enemy striving to climb to his platform. But searching all the morning, with a thatch of wet leaves on head and shoulders, failed to show him a club so effective as the one which he already carried. With its heavy iron spike projecting on one side of the head to form a picking beak, it had little fault but its lightness. He decided that he would have to compensate for that by putting the more muscle into his stroke.

Intent upon his search, Johns had for a

time forgotten the possible perils lurking behind the green jungle wall along the top of the beach. Suddenly a heavy, grunting breath close behind him made him whip about with a sensation of the hair rising on his scalp.

Not more than a dozen paces away stood an old bull buffalo, eyeing him malignly.

Johns recovered himself on the instant. It was the mysteriousness of the sound that had startled him. The moment he understood it his nerves came back to hand. Knowing himself quick on his feet, he felt certain that he could dodge the brute's charge and escape him, if necessary, by plunging into the lagoon. But he did not want to run away, if he could avoid it. He stood his ground, poised and ready, and met the beast's stare calmly.

At first the bull seemed inclined to attack, as if resenting the man's mere presence. He pawed the sand, angry but irresolute. He snorted and took a couple of steps nearer. But the man's utter immobility, together with his calm gaze, seemed to act upon the great animal like a cooling douche. His angry tail began to droop. He glanced aside as if remembering an appointment, and finally, after a sullen rumbling in his throat, he turned away and lumbered off toward the stream. Once or twice he paused and looked back defiantly, as if he half expected the man to pursue him. But Johns remained where he was, leaning on his lance, till the buffalo had wallowed across to the opposite bank. Then, muttering to himself, "I'd better be getting another forty winks, if I'm going to keep awake all night," he betook himself to his tree, and went up into the branches as lightly and neatly as a chimpanzee.

Having slept heavily through the midday heat, Johns devoted the rest of the daylight to strengthening his position. He lugged up into the tree a number of suitable fragments of wreckage, with a lot of long, trailing fragments of a tough-fibred wild vine. Using the vine as lashing, he constructed a fairly solid platform, with a raised edge to keep him from falling off in his sleep. Here he felt that he could be comfortable enough, for a castaway, if the leopards would leave him alone. If they wouldn't, he thought that he could now manage to give them a salutary lesson.

Just before sunset he brought a big bunch of plantains up into the tree, with a bit of dry spruce which he had found among the wreckage, and half a dozen hard, sharp-edged shells. He proposed to occupy his enforced vigil with the business of scraping a store of fine, fluffy fibre, to serve as tinder when he should undertake to start a fire. But he was not to enjoy any such quietly domestic evening as he anticipated. He had not yet sounded the capacities of the jungle.

From far back in the forest came a heavy roar which sent a thrill of apprehension down his spine. It was such an utterance as no leopard was capable of. He knew at once that only a lion or a tiger could so proclaim himself. This was not the latitude or longitude for lions. What could he do, with his poor weapons, against a tiger? For a few minutes his heart went down to where his boots would have been had he had any; and he saw himself going hourly in trembling watchfulness, ready on the instant to flee into his tree-top like a frightened monkey. Then, like a flood of warmth through all his veins, came surging back his old faith in man as the master animal. He told himself that all solitary and naked and an alien in the land as he was, he was, nevertheless, lord of all these brutes, supreme so long as will and courage failed him not. He had read how naked savages, in several lost corners of earth, were wont to hunt the tiger or the jaguar alone and with no weapon but a sharpened stake. He would teach the tiger, when the time came, to give way before him even as the leopard and the buffalo had done. In the dusk he sat scraping with a shell at his jagged lance-tip, till the hard point was almost needle fine.

After that roar there had been no more sounds of visitors coming down through the dusk to drink at the stream. The long silence grew ominous, and the man found himself straining his ears so intently that he began to imagine sounds that did not exist. He thought he heard heavy, padded footsteps under his tree, but, peering down, he was able to see clearly that there was nothing there.

At last the moon rose. It was no more than half-way above the sea-line—a red, distorted, swollen segment of a disc—when, some hundred yards away, the tiger emerged from the thickets, walking straight down into the eye of it. It was evident that he had some inkling of the man's presence, for he sniffed with menacing inquiry and came on straight toward the tree.

Johns was assured that tigers, in general, were not given to tree-climbing. He also knew that many wild beasts, at a pinch, would defy the accepted dicta of natural

history. He was ready, however, to back his own alertness among the branches against that of any tiger. When the striped and venomous-looking brute came under the tree and lifted dreadful eyes to his, he cursed him scornfully and threw down a stick of drift-wood.

As luck would have it, the missile caught the tiger fair across the muzzle. He snarled with surprise and rage, drew back, crouched, and launched himself in a magnificent spring for the lowermost branch, where it jutted out at right angles to the main trunk. He made good his hold with his great forepaws in the crotch, and hung there for a second or two, clawing with his hinder-paws at the trunk below, before he could draw himself fully up.

This was just what Johns had hoped and planned for; and he was ready, lying outstretched on his platform, spear in hand. Jabbing downward sharply, but not too heavily—for fear of breaking his point—he struck the beast in the face twice, and slashed him straight across one eye, quite destroying it. The tiger roared with pain, got one hind-paw up on to the branch, and stretched his head far aside to avoid the stabbing strokes at his face. This attitude exposed his neck and throat.

And now, risking his point, the man stabbed savagely. The point went true, entering just behind the brute's jaw, and with all the strength of both arms the man drove his stroke home. The harsh-edged ash tore its way clean through; and, with a choked screech, the tiger, stiffening backwards convulsively, fell to the ground, carrying the spear with him. For a time he whirled himself around and around, clawing and coughing, and blowing out great clots of bloody froth. Then at last he sank down and lay still.

"Curse him, he's broken my spear!" grumbled Johns, dissembling the exultation which swelled his heart. Then, rightly arguing that the presence of that dread form beneath the tree would effectually discourage other visitors, he settled himself to sleep.

Next day Johns was in doubt, for a time, what to do with the tiger's body. He longed to skin it, that he might dry the hide in the sun and keep it for a trophy and a couch; but, with no skinning knife except a shell, he shrank from the task. Finally he decided that the dead beast should serve as an object-lesson—a notice to all the wilderness marauders that the dweller in the tree was not to be trifled with. He dragged the body several hundred yards down the wind and left it on the beach, some yards out from the jungle edge, where all eyes might consider it carefully. He felt confident that word of the tiger-slayer would spread quickly through the forest, and he would be no more troubled.

In this conclusion Johns was doubtless right, for among the wild kindreds no less than among men is prestige a potent influence. He had proved himself master of the monarch of the jungle, therefore he himself was monarch. Even the elephant, sagacious and a respecter of jungle law, would have avoided trespassing on the masterful tree-dweller's range. But Johns's luck was following him, and he was not to be put to the test of exercising for long the sovereignty which he had so swiftly established.

On the second day after the affair with the tiger, a Dutch trading schooner hove-to under the lee of the promontory, just outside the reef, and sent a boat ashore for water, the quality of Johns's stream being known to certain craft in the island trade. A mile or two further down the reef was a narrow entrance feasible for a longboat or a cutter, and Johns soon found himself celebrating his happy abdication in trousers a thought too broad for his build and a glass of pungent schnapps.

His story for a moment taxed the faith of his sturdy rescuers, but an examination of the dead beast's carcase, with the improvised spear through its throat, proved convincing evidence; and Johns was able to carry his prestige with him to the polished decks of the schooner. It was a light luggage, but one precious in his eyes.

A BREATH.

A DEAD leaf fell to the earth one day
(Oh, sorry autumn sight!)
But a breeze arose, and with kindly sway
It lifted the leaf far up and away
To the golden sunset light.

I sat by a dying man one day
(Oh, common, direful sight!)
But as Death asserted his iron sway,
God breathed from His Heaven, far up and away,
The soul rose to the light!

MARY BELL.

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THE PIER, THE PEARLS, AND THE PIERI.

BY JESSIE POPE.

"IT'S good to hear you chaps swanking about the places you've been to in the vac.," remarked Tubby Venables to Rossiter and Burchett minor—"Switzerland, Killarney, the Land of the Midnight Sun, and piffling holes of that sort. I don't mind betting I had the toppingest time of the lot."

"Why, what did you do, Tubby?" said Rossiter, who, though a much bigger chap, was by way of being Tubby's admirer.

"Something marvellous, of course," remarked Burchett minor, who was a bit jealous of Tubby's charms.

"No, nothing absolutely marvellous," replied Tubby, "only pearl-diving."

"That's a lie," said Burchett, "for the nearest pearl fishery is in the Persian Gulf, and I know you haven't been there, because some of my people saw you at Saltbourne-on-Sea."

"That's very likely," remarked Tubby, "because I was certainly there—in fact, it happened to be at Saltbourne that I had my pearl-diving."

"Rats!" remarked Burchett minor. "If you'd have said *Colchester*, I might have believed you."

"Very well," said Tubby, "if you don't want to hear the yarn, you needn't."

"But we *do*," said Rossiter—"at least, *I* do, and that's sufficient; and if Burchett interrupts again, I'll twist the game arm he broke last term."

"Right O!" remarked Tubby. "Well, to start with, my pearl-diving hadn't anything to do with oysters, and Saltbourne isn't anywhere near Colchester—in fact, it's on the other side of the map. It's not a bad little place, but unfortunately in August it's brimming over with bounders—in fact, has been called the Margate of the West."

"Oh, skip the guide-book," said Burchett. "Shut-t up-p-p, Rossy, you brute! That hurts!"

"I mean it to, my son," replied Rossiter. "Fire away, Tubs—he won't give any more trouble."

"The Margate of the West," repeated Tubby. "The trippers come in by train-loads, but my reason for going was because my grandpater has got a jolly fine house on the cliff, and it's a top-hole place to stay in. Besides, though the parade may be piled with perambulators and the beach practically black with bounders, there's one place entirely set aside for the use of the residents, and that's the end of the pier, or rather a whacking big landing-stage built on piles, just beyond it, with bathing-boxes on the top deck and a fishing platform below."

"What fishing do you get?" said Rossiter.

"Pollack—the sea's stiff with 'em," replied Tubby, "though, to tell the honest truth, the only fish I ever hooked was a lady swimmer, and she broke my rod. But it wasn't mine; it was my grandpater's, so it didn't matter so much. Anyhow, I'm not keen on fishing, though that lower platform was always cool and shady. You see, being always in shadow and close to the water, among the seaweed-covered piles, it was a clinking place for a book and a bag of cherries when it was boiling hot everywhere else. The bathing-boxes on the top deck belonged to the residents. I only got one on account of my grandpater, and it was lucky for me I did, or I should have been out of all the fun that followed. You see, the landing-stage had been built originally to land the steamboat passengers on, because the sand had shifted, and there wasn't water enough at the pier-head; but fortunately the sand shifted back again, so the trippers were kept to the pier, and we had the landing-stage to ourselves. Of course, only swimmers bathed from there, and good swimmers, too, for when there was a bit of a lop on, it was jolly difficult to hit the steps when you came in—the waves had a way of sweeping you among the piles, which was no joke, as they were covered with barnacles. The ladies didn't bathe when it was very rough, and they weren't allowed to bathe from the landing-stage before breakfast either, and some of them were rather shirty about it; but, as I pointed out to them, it was quite

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a concession on our part to have them bathing with us at all, and advised them to let well alone. Mind you, I don't wish you chaps to think I'm a woman-hater, because I'm not, but there's no doubt, in many ways, the before-breakfast bathe was the best of the lot. Apart from the fact that you needn't use the boxes, but could dress and undress in the open if you wanted to, a fellow needn't shave before he came down, as there were no women about."

"Ahem!" said Burchett, adding hurriedly: "Stop it, Rossy! I suppose a chap can *cough!*"

"No, not in that tone," said Rossiter. "Go on, Tubs."

"Craggs used to go in before breakfast, too, and it was always sport to watch old Craggs, who, as I may or may not have told you, was the landing-stage attendant, whose job consisted of drying our bathing kit and towels, and hustling the steamer trippers up and down the gangways leading to the pier. He'd a great contempt for steamboat trippers, and no wonder. They *do* look a footling lot, with their hat-guards, and their mackintoshes, and their paper bags full of prog. Our landing-stage crowd always got lots of fun out of them, as, being residents, of course they never went trips themselves. I admit I went one, but I managed to sneak on so that none of our lot saw me; but I never really felt safe till I got on the pier again, because, of course, it was rather decent of the residents to admit me as one of themselves at all, and I don't quite know how they would have taken it if they'd spotted me hustling down the gangway with the steamboat gang. Craggs *did*, as a matter of fact, but I gave him a tip the next morning, so I knew he was safe. Besides, old Craggs never gave anybody away, except once, and then he didn't really mean to. But that's part of the yarn.

"I thought you'd forgotten the yarn," remarked Burchett. "That'll *do*, Rossy! Do you want to crack the bone again, you brute?"

"Yes, next time we have any of your gas, I do," said Rossiter.

"About eleven o'clock every morning," continued Tubby, with a complacent smile, "the residents used to come down to the landing-stage. There were a few old boys—retired Army chaps, and that sort of thing—and a few old Tabbies to look after the girls, and they wanted it, for they were pretty lively, and nearly all of 'em good-looking, particularly in their bathing kit, and there were several young chaps who either didn't have to work, lucky beggars, or who were home for their holidays. They were all decent swimmers, but one chap was simply top-hole, and we called him Towser, from his likeness to a bull-dog. He wasn't a dressy man, like the rest of us—always turned out in shabby grey flannels—but he stripped magnificently, and, in spite of his rather ugly mug, he looked fine in his bathing costume—one of those dark-blue knitted ones that you can only buy in America, I believe. Not that Towser was a Yank; he was connected with a lot of titled people here, though you'd never have known it from *him*, but the Tabbies found it out. He didn't put on an ounce of side about his swimming or his connections, and he was always ready to give a chap a wrinkle in diving, and never lost patience when you muffed your dive time after time, though it all seemed so easy to him. It was fine to see him take a running dive from the top of the landing-stage at low water, and not make more than a handful of splash, and he did it just because he liked it, not because people were looking at him. The other chap that comes into this yarn was an absolutely different sort. He was called Vereker, and the girls all raved about him, partly because he was good-looking, with curly black hair and blue eyes, and partly because he wrote clinking good poetry and wore a clean suit of white ducks every day. You'd have thought *he* was the chap with lots of cash, instead of shabby old Towser. But, as a matter of fact, Vereker hadn't a cent, while Towser rolled in 'em; and they were both in love with Monica Mathews, who was far and away the prettiest girl who bathed from the pier.

"My word, she *was* a clinker, and no mistake! I can't describe her properly to you chaps, except by saying her hair was the carroty side of brown, and she'd got big, sleepy green eyes, and a very languid way of talking. The Tabbies said Vereker was after her shekels, she being an heiress, and that the white ducks were a sprat to catch a whale, which was very likely true; but, anyhow, they couldn't say old Towser wanted her money, having plenty of his own. She used to send me to the shop at the end of the pier every morning, to buy greengages and chocolates, and always gave me more than half, and, for all her calm, dignified, and rather conceited airs, she was a clinking good sort. She looked ripping in the water, too, either in her green bathing-dress or her lavender one; she wore them each by turns, and I don't

know which she looked best in. But Monica never dived—oh, no! She just pushed off carefully from the steps, and swam with a slow breast-stroke that kept her head well out of the water, not wanting to wet her top-knot, and she always wore a string of whacking big pearls round her neck when she bathed, much to the old Tabbies' disgust, who thought she did it just for swank and to show how white her neck was; and though Monica said she wore the pearls to give them a taste of their native element, very likely the Tabbies were right. Vereker and Towser had both proposed to her more than once, not to mention several other chaps, but she put them all off with one excuse or another, though it was pretty clear she was trying to make up her mind which of the two she liked best; and, as far as I could see, Vereker and his white ducks was leading Towser by about a head, and the field nowhere. Still, things went along pretty smoothly, and everybody was enjoying the weather and the bathing, for both were simply perfect, till one morning which happened to be Friday, the thirteenth of August.

"Nobody can say I'm a superstitious chap—of course, I occasionally have a go at table-turning at Christmas parties, and things, but only in order to give the table a jolly good shove on my own account—but I must say there is something a bit weird about the bad luck which happened all round on this particular Friday which, as I said, was the thirteenth. Everything went all right to start with, and we stood on the landing-stage, waiting to bathe, till the steamer had sheered off from the pier-head, all except Towser, who was playing about in the green water, all lathered up white with the steamer's paddles. It looked jolly fine, but none of the rest of us had the nerve to do it—or rather the swank, as Vereker said. However, personally I think it wants something more than swank to catch hold of the bow of the steamer with one hand, as she backs out away from the pier, and be pulled along through the churning water like a spinner on the end of a mackerel line, and I argued Towser did it just because he liked the sensation, and I'm sure Monica agreed. Anyhow, as Towser came up the steps to sit in the sun for a bit before going in again, she threw him a greengage, which he caught and began to eat, until a wasp, blown across from the beach, settled on the greengage and stung him on the end of the nose. It wasn't a bad sting, but it swelled up poor old Towser's nose something chronic, and made the girls giggle every time they looked at him; and Vereker concocted a rotten riddle on the spur of the moment—'Why is Towser like a wasp?' 'Because one knows the swells, and the other swells the nose'—which made them giggle more, Monica included. But her turn was coming. Before it came, however, Nancy Pettifer, the girl who wore a scarlet bathing-dress and black stockings—but I haven't had time to tell you about her—ran a big splinter in the sole of her foot where there was a hole in the stocking, and that did *her* in for a day or two; and I took a running dive off the fishing platform, as there were plenty of people about to see, and slipped on something as I took off. Anyhow, I ricked my back horribly, though, of course, I didn't say anything much. If I had, Monica, perhaps, wouldn't have laughed, and been a bit more sympathetic. Still, I got even with her, because, when we were all in the water, I shied a polo ball at her head, knowing how she hates that sort of thing, and hoping she would get a ducking; but she didn't, just getting her arms up to knock it off in time. So she laughed at me again, and was quite frivolous, for her, that morning, until she got on the steps to come out, and one of the old Tabbies looked over the top and said—

"'I'm glad to see, Monica, that you have shown wisdom in not wearing your pearls in the water to-day.'

"Monica put her hand up to her neck and went very white.

"'But I was wearing them!' she said. Then she looked round at the group of heads bobbing up and down in the green water, and called out in a trembling tone, 'I've lost my pearls!' and burst out blubbing.

"Of course, though in a way it was her own fault, we were all frightfully sorry for her—not on account of the pearls costing a pot of money, but because Monica valued them so much, or she would never have blubbed like a kid about them before us all. I glanced across at Towser, and I'm blessed if he didn't look as if he was going to blub too, he was so sorry for her; and that, added to his nose, made him look pretty rum, I can tell you. But, of course, Vereker came up and said the right thing, which was, that the pearls were perfectly safe down on the sand there, and we'd get them for her at low water without any difficulty, though, of course, we all knew that was easier said than done; but we were glad Vereker managed to buck her up, for she looked so down on her

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luck, standing there with the water trickling out of her light green bathing-dress, and the tears trickling out of her green eyes.

"Then the pearl-diving began. Towser didn't wait till low water, bless you; neither did Craggs, neither did your humble, and presently we were all at it, even Vereker, who, like his lady-love, was a fair-weather swimmer, and didn't fancy the bottom much. But it was as good as a play to watch *him* trying to reach it. He got his beautiful curly head under, and kicked like mad, and thought he was going down, but he never got more than a foot or two from the surface, with his legs thrashing the water, and his face, when he *did* come up, was as much like a codfish on the point of bursting as anything I hope to see. I laughed till I ricked my back again, so did the others, not excepting Monica, who had got dressed and was watching the diving operations, calm and dignified once more, but a bit pink about the eyelids. As for old Towser, he was on the bottom of the sea most of the morning, and I did my bit, too; and I can tell you chaps it's no joke scrabbling about down there with a few hundred tons of water on the top of your head."

"Some of it got through to your brain—that's what makes you so barmy, I suppose," began Burchett, concluding in a high scream, "I withdraw! Didn't mean it! I apologise!" in response to Rossiter's prompt attentions.

"Thanks, Rossy," continued Tubby. "Well, we were at it again in the afternoon and evening. You see, we thought—at least, the original idea was mine—that the snap of the necklace must have burst when I sent the polo ball at Monica; and that helped us, though, of course, it was difficult to place her exact position at the time, and the most we could do was to go down again and again.

"Vereker had several more goes, but he wasn't an ounce of use, though it became pretty clear that, if either of the two rivals got the necklace, he would probably get Monica too, she was so dead keen on the pearls, which, as a matter of fact, were an heirloom. It really was sport to see those two chaps diving against each other, though Vereker could never get to the bottom unless he dived in from the board, while it was simply wonderful to see the time Towser could stop swimming about on the sand below. Then Vereker got stung by a jellyfish and turned it up; but Towser kept on, and, when at last he gave it up for the day as well, though his nose had gone back to the proper shape, his face was a sort of pale mauve colour with yellow patches—in fact, he looked as if he had been kept on ice for a month.

"Vereker didn't turn up the next day at all—we supposed he was nursing his jellyfish sting—but Craggs and Towser and I and a few other chaps put in a lot of good work; but, though we began to know that particular bit of ocean bed like the inside of our hats, we never spotted the pearls.

"The next day Vereker came back, looking more dazzling than ever in his ducks. He'd apparently quite forgotten his sting, and was very eager to know if the pearls had been found.

"'No,' replied Monica, who hadn't bathed yet, 'and I'm sure there's no chance. You needn't worry any more. They've gone for ever; I've given up hoping.'

"'I haven't,' replied Vereker, looking sentimentally into her eyes. 'I'm going to have another dive for them, and I want you to stand by and cheer me on.' As a rule, Vereker takes almost as long dressing and undressing as the girls, but this particular morning he was in and out of his box as sharp as a knife, and we all waited to see him dive, or, rather, to see his face when he came up again.

"He dived from the steps, going in as deep as usual, and next moment up he came like a cork. He gave a whoop, everybody rushed to see, and lo and behold, the pearls were in his hand! I was thunderstruck, so was Towser, as I could see by his face, but Monica gave a cry of joy, and ran down the steps to meet Vereker as he climbed up out of the water.

"'There they are, Monica,' he said. He'd never called her Monica before, but she didn't care. Her face was all pink with joy, and she took the precious pearls, and looked as if she would like to kiss him, and I believe she would have done if we hadn't all been looking on. Then her face went white again, and her eyes were like two great green stars as she looked straight into his, but all she said was, 'Thank you!' and Vereker seemed quite satisfied.

"'Well, personally,' I said, going over to Towser, 'I don't see how he was down long enough to find 'em.'

"'He got them, anyhow,' said Towser grimly, and then he went at once to tell Monica how glad he was, and to congratulate Vereker on his luck. Monica didn't take much notice of his congrats. or anybody else's. She was all over Vereker, and never tired of hearing how, as he went down, he

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"Lo and behold, the pearls were in his hand!"

saw the pearls gleaming against one of the piles, and gave an extra kick and got down to them.

"Well, I don't want to make a bad joke, but I must say Vereker getting the pearls like that seemed to me a fishy business, and I'm sure Towser, for one, thought the same, though, like a sensible chap, he kept his tongue between his teeth. But Monica was quite happy, and said she must go in the water at once, to thank the sea for giving her necklace back to her, and called to

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Craggs to bring her her bathing-dress. She'd been wearing her mauve one the last two days, because she said she was in mourning for her pearls, but now she was out of mourning she would have the sea-green one again. Craggs had been on the pier-head during the excitement, and didn't know anything about it, but at Monica's call he came on to the landing-stage, and presently approached with the sea-green bathing-dress in his hand, and a very queer expression on his face.

"'Just look a 'ere, missie,' he said, holding out the dress to her—'just you have a look inside of it.'

"Monica looked, and we all did, and there, caught in a sort of hook inside the tunic part, was another string of pearls.

"'They must a' slipped down yer back, and been 'ere ever since,' said Craggs, 'though the wonder is they didn't drop out when I hung it up to dry; but they're caught tight on this 'ook. See?'

"Monica stared first at the pearls in the bathing-dress, and then at the pearls in her hand.

"'But, Craggs,' she said, 'Mr. Vereker has just fished up my pearls from the bottom of the sea!'

"Vereker, who had been telling his yarn again to two old Tabbies who had just arrived, came up to Monica when he heard his name. 'What's the matter?' he said.

"'Craggs has just found these in here,' replied Monica, looking puzzled and troubled, holding out the sea-green bathing-dress so that he could see for himself. Vereker laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

"'You must have been wearing two rows of pearls,' he said.

"'Oh, but I haven't got two,' objected Monica, frowning.

"'You have *now*, anyhow,' returned Vereker, still smiling, and apparently not the least little bit put out.

"'Can you tell which is yours, miss?' said Craggs. Both looked so much alike that it was difficult for even Monica to be sure, and everybody felt jolly uncomfortable. But I wasn't going to miss my bathe, and dashed into the only empty box, though I took a bit longer in undressing than usual, because I wanted to think the matter over.

"When I came out, Vereker was dressed, and still discussing the mystery of the two necklaces with Monica and the others.

"'It's a bit hard on poor me to have only made a dead heat of it, after all,' he was saying, and took out his handkerchief at that moment to flick at a wasp that was hovering over Monica. As he did so, a paper came out of his pocket and fluttered across the landing-stage. Towser tried to put his foot on it, but missed. Vereker ran to the edge, but the paper just fluttered over before he got there.

"'Was it important?' said Towser.

"'Not a bit,' replied Vereker calmly, but I noticed he moistened his lips nervously as he spoke, so I ran down the steps, and dived in, and had got the paper before Vereker saw what I was after. Then I heard him call out—

"'Drop it, you little fool! I don't want it, I tell you!'

"But by that time I'd seen enough to make me hang on to it like grim death. It was a bill from a London jeweller—one of those places where they sell faked stuff that looks just like the real thing, and it was made out to

"— Vereker, Esq.,
One row Parisian pearls, 16*s.* 6*d.*
A remittance will oblige."

"I daren't swim back for fear that Vereker would get it before I could show him up. So I trod water and called out—

"'Listen here, all of you! The mystery's solved.' And I read out the bill in my very best voice. Then I swam in and gave the paper to Monica, who looked as if she was going to cry again. She stared at the paper, and then walked up the steps with it in her hand.

"'Perhaps he can explain,' she said, and looked round for Vereker. But he wasn't there. We saw a glimpse of white ducks disappearing down the pier, and that was all, and he didn't trouble that landing-stage again.

"He'd played rank rotten cricket, and I must say I was jolly glad to be the one to bowl him. Of course, Monica was a bit upset, but she soon got over it, and really behaved very decently by tipping Craggs a sovereign and giving me a watch, and becoming Mrs. Towser in six weeks' time. And that's all about it, so now you've got the whole of the yarn for what it's worth," concluded Tubby Venables.

"Which is precious little," remarked Burchett minor, and fled.

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KINDERGARTEN.

By FRED M. WHITE,

Author of "The Corner House," "The Crimson Blind," "The Brand of Silence," etc.

DESPITE the bitter blight of it, a little knot of curious passengers stepped out into the corridor to see what was the matter. The biting cold struck them like a blow, a flurry of snow lashed and stung. Overhead the clouds were hurrying onwards, the white battalions came streaming down the gale, the pine trees rocked and swayed before the force of it. The autocratic guard, master of the train as absolutely as a captain on board his own ship, waved the eager questions on one side.

"There's nothing the matter at all," he said, "and if you want something in the way of a snow-up, I guess I can't give it you. Fact is, the driver saw a man lying on the track, and he sorter pulled up. We've taken him on board now, and a doctor is setting his leg. And that's all!"

The passengers were glad enough to get back to the warmth and comfort of the train, and Pete Morran himself was beginning to conclude that there was something in life, after all. He lay there on a heap of cushions, his teeth set and clenched, and a grey pallor under his tan, as the doctor worked away at his injured limb.

"Calculate I'm all right now," he said presently, "but it was just a chance. My horse died under me, and I slipped in crossing one of these trestle bridges, and bust that darned old limb. Much as I could do to get on the track, with the off-chance of holding up your express. But it came off all right, and it looks as if luck was turning the glad eye on me. Happen that Mrs. Bruce Evershed is on the train, and I guess the glad eye is fairly winking at me."

"Oh, I'll go and see," the doctor said good-naturedly. "Yes, you can have a pipe, if you like, but no whisky."

Pete accepted the situation with philosophy. He seemed particularly anxious to see Mrs. Bruce Evershed without delay.

"I guess she's on the train," he said. "I had a letter from my little girl to say that she and the missis were travelling West to-day on the North-Eastern Express, and my intention was to board the car at Overton. Then I got this bust, and I had to take all the chances that were lying around."

Mrs. Bruce Evershed, small and dainty and alluring, and a perfect picture of graceful beauty, looked up from her snug nest of furs as the doctor addressed her. She seemed to be the last word in luxury and extravagance. It would have been hard to picture her in any other attitude besides that of the ball-room and the theatre. Yet with it all there was just a suggestion of power in her eyes and the firm lines of her mouth. Her beauty was slightly marred by her petulant expression, which had in it some hint of pathos and unhappiness. She suggested a woman who was trying to get away from herself, a woman bored and satiated with the sweets of life, and hungry for a more healthy atmosphere.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"Well, I hardly like to trouble you," the doctor apologised, "but there's a man in one of the brake vans who is asking for you. He was lying on the track when we pulled up and took him on board. He has sustained a nasty fracture of the right leg. I think his name is Pete Morran."

The bored, discontented look was wiped from Mrs. Evershed's face as if a sponge had been passed over it. Her brown eyes grew alert and eager. She threw aside her costly furs and prepared to follow.

"This is very startling," she said. "The man you speak of is my maid's father. What is he doing here? But perhaps I had better go and see."

Pete greeted the dainty figure, with the brown eyes and sunny hair, with a broad smile of the friendliest description. Mrs. Evershed held out a hand to him that looked like one of the snowflakes on the window as it lay in his brown fist.

"I am glad to see you, Pete," she said. Her voice trembled suspiciously as she spoke.

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"You are like a link with the past. But tell me, is there anything wrong?"

"Guess we will come to that presently," Pete said. "If you are under the impression that I'm out looking for you—well, you've guessed it first time, because I am."

"Did—did he send for me?"

"Well, I can't go so far as to say that. But he wants you, and cruel bad, too. You see, I heard from my little girl that you were on your way to England on this train, and I concluded to chip in at Overton. Then I threw up against this little trouble, and had to call a fresh deal. You see, at Overton I expected not only to meet you, but to get help."

"Help? Pete, you frighten me! Don't tell me that there is anything wrong with Bruce. If he died——"

"Oh, I guess it isn't so bad as that," Pete said cheerfully. "But he's in danger. You see, him and me we were mining up the Sierras—same old spot where you and him had that honeymoon of yours two years ago."

Mrs. Evershed sighed gently. She had good reason to remember her solitary six months in a mining camp. It all rose vividly to her eyes now. Put her on the right track, and she could have found her way to the camp blindfold.

"Oh, do go on!" she said impatiently.

"Well, there was him and me alone together, and we'd struck it real rich. We buried the stuff in the floor of the tent until we was fairly rocked asleep on a gold mine. And some of those galoots down Red Creek way found it out, and there were we all alone, on the chance of being murdered in our beds. But, after all, there were two of us, and we were armed, and there never was any real grit in that lot. They didn't come out in the open and fight; they just waited for their chance, like a set of cowardly vultures. Then your old man he gets down with an attack of malaria, and I tell you I was hard put to it, what with the cooking and the watching, and one thing and another. And old Bruce he says to me: 'Pete, lad, you've got to go out and get some reinforcements. You're pretty tough, but you can't stand the strain much longer.' And I figured it all out—I figured it as I could get up the reserves in about thirty hours. And we laid a little trap for 'em. We made it look as if we'd cleared out altogether. I fed Bruce up and kinder buried him under half a ton of hay in the corner of the tent, and let the snow drift in so that the place looked fair deserted. There wasn't any smoke, and there didn't appear to be any food, and I guess I played it up on those chaps properly. Then again perhaps I didn't. They might have smelt the trick, and they might at this moment be giving your old man—— But I don't like to think of that."

"Oh, this is dreadful!" Mrs. Evershed cried. "You ought to have been back there by this time. What am I to do? The idea of my husband lying there at the mercy of those ruffians drives me mad, and you are useless for the present. Tell me what I can do. I would go myself now—I'd ride every inch of the way alone—if I thought that I could save him."

"I believe you would," Pete said admiringly. "Now, it's no use worrying anybody here. I guess there's nobody on the train who's made of the right stuff for our purpose. There's no help for it, Mrs. Bruce. But here am I like a darned great log, more in the way than anything else. Now, you get off the train at Overton and tell this little yarn to the station hands. It's only twenty miles up the valley from here, and a good horse will get you through before dark."

Mrs. Evershed set her little teeth together.

"I'll go," she said. "I'll find Elsie, and change my clothing at once. Everything necessary is in my baggage. But you must stay on the train and wait for us at the other end. When I start for England, I shall take my husband with me."

"Bully for you!" Pete cried. "That's the best I've heard for many a day, not but what I shall miss him, for a better pard no man could ever wish for. But you've come first, and you always did. And he just aches for you as much as ever. And if you haven't greatly changed yourself——"

"I shall never change, Pete," Mrs. Evershed said simply.

"Then you go to him, and this darned old broken leg of mine will be a blessing in disguise. I'm a plain man and not much of a scholar, but when you live all alone like I do, you learn to think. And he treated you in the right way. And I bet a dollar that you'd be the first to admit it."

Mrs. Evershed held out her hand without a reply. There was something like a frown upon her forehead, and in her eyes a blend of laughter and tears. All the listlessness and languor had left her now; indeed, it might have been a different woman who stepped out on to the howling platform dressed for a perilous journey through the snow. She had been through all this kind of thing before, and her heart was full of courage despite the

cold and the stinging lash of the gale in her face. Just for a moment she was conscious of a sense of desolation as the express disappeared in the white, whirling mists.

There was cold comfort here, too. There had been trouble somewhere down the line, and one solitary express man remained in the station. He looked at Grace Evershed with a certain rugged pity in his eyes.

"Mean to say you're going alone?" he asked.

"If I have to," Grace said between her teeth.

"Well, I calculate it will have to be just that way. So far as I know, I'm the only thing that walks on two legs within ten miles of this location. I'd come if I could, but that means the wreck of a train or two. I can find you a horse and a saddle and a bridle. You can have a couple of guns, too, but I guess they won't be much use to you."

"Well, I guess they would," Mrs. Evershed snapped. "I calculate that I'm pretty useful with a revolver."

She set out presently, armed for the fray. She was beginning to realise the peril and danger that lay before her. And yet only an hour or two ago she had lain snug and warm in her furs, with no drear prospect like this before her. As she rode along, with the white flurry raging around her, her mind was busy with the past. She remembered the time when she had first met Bruce; she recalled to mind his peculiar views on the subject of women and their duty to the world. Until she and Bruce had first come together, she had lived a frivolous, selfish life—the only child of a doting father, who had left her more money than was good for any single girl to possess.

She had never meant to marry Evershed, though she admired his courage and his manliness and that strong, resolute face of his. She was never going to call any man master. And then, somehow, it came about that she did marry him, and from that moment the trouble began. Not that he ever upbraided her—there were no "scenes" in the vulgar sense of the word—but his brow grew darker, and he became more silent as the days went on, until the project for a long trip to the Sierras came up. Grace was jaded and tired with the brilliant social whirl, and she clutched eagerly at the notion. She would have started out with a retinue of servants and all the pampered luxury of her clan, but Evershed had put his foot on that. She found herself roughing it as a daughter of the soil would have done. She found herself rising at dawn, washing and cooking and doing all the menial work of the household. She found herself clad entirely in homespuns, cut off, as it seemed, ten thousand miles from civilisation, with a taskmaster of a husband who worked her like a slave. She had not as yet learnt to face the solitude of the woods. She had all the town-bred girl's horror of the wild solitude and Nature unconfined. She would have turned her back upon it had she dared. But Evershed had refused to accompany her; he refused to turn his face towards civilisation, and if she wanted to go back to the other butterflies, she must find her way there unaided.

It was a somewhat grim and cruel plot which Evershed had evolved as a means of working out his wife's salvation. He made no disguise of what he had done; there was no pretence about it whatever. And, if Grace did not like it, she could go. There were days and weeks together when husband and wife hardly spoke, and when Pete Morran was like a godsend to both of them. And despite her wild rebellion against Fate, Grace Evershed was gradually falling under the fascination of snow and pine and glorious air, and all that goes to the making of a perfect country. She had lost all her lassitude and boredom. There was elasticity in her limbs, and joy in the knowledge of her strength. And there came a time when she could hunt and shoot and fish with the best of them—a time when she could have saddled her own pony and ridden off home by way of Overton without a qualm. But if Evershed had his pride, so also had she found her own. She had promised to come for a year, and she would see it out to the bitter end. Her husband should never brand her as a coward. And gradually, too, she began to see that Evershed was right. There came a time when she could no longer disguise from herself that she owed a debt of gratitude to Bruce for teaching her how to live. And there came a time, too, when she was glad, not perhaps that she had married him, but glad that he belonged to her, and that no other woman in the world could possess him.

But, all the same, at the end of the year she rode away without a word of farewell or even the intimation that she was going. Her year was over and the lesson was finished. Probably she would never look upon Bruce Evershed again. She tried to persuade herself that it did not in the least matter. But that attitude had been abandoned long

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ago. She stood face to face with herself and argued the matter out calmly. She loved Evershed, and she knew now that she had given him her heart from the first. She had good health and good looks and unlimited means, but she would have cheerfully bartered these to feel Evershed's arms about her and his lips on hers. If she could only find a way, if she could only provide herself with some bright and shining weapon wherewith to break down the barriers of pride, the day was won. And Pete had been quite right—she loved Bruce, and Bruce loved her, and the rest of the world mattered nothing.

And lo and behold, here was the weapon in her hand! Every step of the way was taking her nearer and nearer to her happiness. But would she be in time? That was the question which was racking her. Even under the mantle of snow she could recognise the outline of familiar landmarks. She drew a long, deep breath as the little camp came in sight.

Pete had told her to expect nothing but solitude and desolation. But here were fresh footprints in the snow; a thin wreath of smoke whirled and drifted in the tempest—there was a fire in the tent, beyond a doubt. In the pines behind the tent Grace could see three horses tethered. Assuredly the vultures were getting closer. Had they been bold enough to attack their prey? she wondered. A ribald laugh came to her ears down the gale. She dismounted and tethered her own horse, then crept round to the back of the tent and unhobbled the other three. The half-broken ponies broke into a gallop and disappeared behind the white, whirling curtain of snow.

There were three men in the tent, no doubt, for Grace could hear them talking eagerly. She gave a little gasp of thankfulness as she recognised the voice of her husband. It seemed a little weak and tired, but there was no note of surrender in it.

"I tell you no," Evershed was saying. "You can kill me if you like, but you'll benefit nothing by that. You'd never get from me where the stuff might be hidden. Besides, you don't know for a fact that it is hidden. Do you suppose that Pete went away and left me here without taking something along with him?"

"Oh, that's all very well," one of the other men exclaimed, "but you don't kid us with a story like that. Now, see here, Mister Evershed. We've got you properly whacked. Pete may come back to-morrow, and, on the other hand, he mayn't come back at all. If this storm makes good, it'll be days before the trail's open again. And you've got no food, and you ain't likely to get any unless it comes from us. We don't want to let you starve, but, seeing as you've got the rocks, you must pay for the tucker."

"And pay handsomely, too," the second man growled.

"You're a fine, soft-hearted lot," a third voice broke in. "What's the good of throwing away chances like this? Our game is to get the stuff and clear out before the storm begins in earnest. If he won't speak, perish me if I wouldn't make him. Take him up and roast him. Tie him up before the fire till his clothes scorch on his back. He'll open his mouth wide enough then, I'll promise you. Anybody 'd think you were a lot of women!"

The other men growled ominously. It was plain enough that their comrade's suggestion was finding a certain amount of favour in their eyes.

"D'you hear that, Mister Evershed?" the leader asked. "D'you tumble to what Jim was saying? Because I'm game if Red Head here likes to join up. Here, Jim, go out and get some more firewood. There's a pile of dry stuff outside."

"You'll get nothing out of me, you cowardly blackguards!" Evershed cried. "Torture me if you like, but you shall never make me speak. And if you think——"

Evershed broke off abruptly, for the two men were upon him, and he wanted all his strength for the struggle. Weak and spent as he was, he made a fair fight of it, but he was bound at length and dragged to the centre of the tent. It seemed to Grace listening outside that she had come just in the nick of time. There was no fear in her heart, no wild prayer for assistance escaped her lips; she was not even conscious of the cold which was piercing her through and through. But she would have to proceed warily, or her aid and the revolver in her hand might prove useless. There was a second revolver in her pocket, and she had twelve shots in all. If her hand had not lost its cunning, she would know how to use them. It was long odds, too, that these ruffians were not armed. They had come down in this cowardly fashion, feeling sure that Evershed was too weak and ill to put up any sort of a fight. By this time their weapons were, no doubt, far down the valley in the holsters of the stampeded horses.

Grace Evershed crept a few yards away, and crouched down behind a mass of

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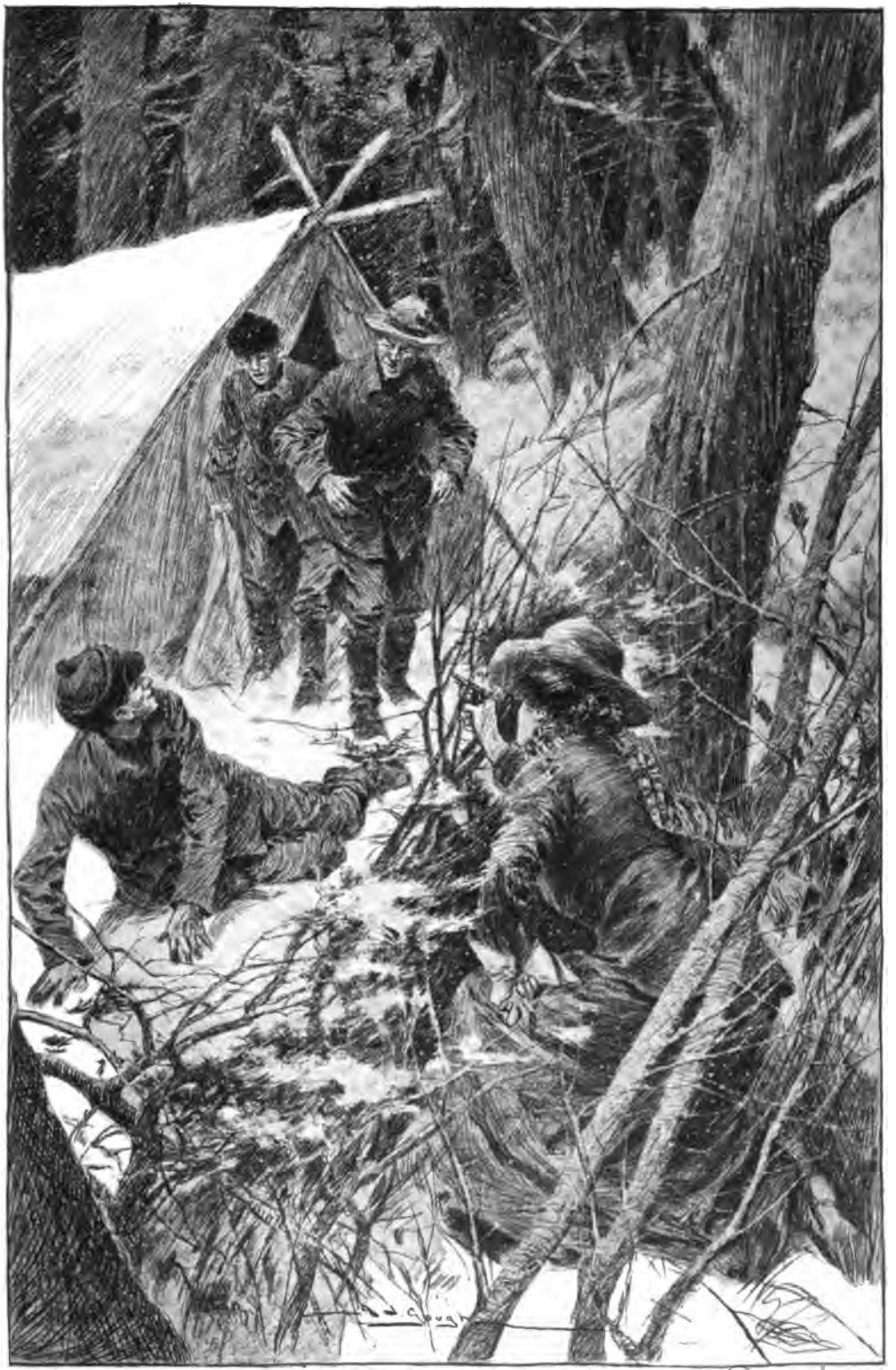

"Grace fired twice in rapid succession."

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undergrowth covered in snow. From here she could watch the movements of the three desperadoes actually inside the tent. She saw the man who had been addressed as Jim come out, presumably with the object of collecting firewood. He stood there for a moment clear-cut as a cameo against a bank of snow. Grace raised the revolver and fired. She saw the man throw up his hands, she heard the yell of execration that rose from his lips as he collapsed in the snow. She had not killed him—she had not the slightest intention of doing so. She had aimed carefully just below the thigh, and she knew that she had broken the ruffian's leg as surely as if a doctor had told her so.

"I'm shot! I'm shot!" the ruffian screamed. "Get a move on you, boys, or we're done for! Where are the guns?"

"With the ponies," a hoarse voice came from inside the tent. "What's up there? You, Jim, what's wrong?"

But Jim answered never a word. He lay there groaning in the snow, absolutely incapable of further mischief. As the other two men rushed to the door of the tent, Grace fired twice in rapid succession. But she was not firing to kill now; she had thought the whole thing out calmly and collectedly. It might be days before relief came to their aid from Overton; the snow might lie deep and the trail be wiped out. If she wounded any more of these rascals, she would have to tend them, and have them on her hands, and, for aught she knew, the tent was none too well provisioned.

There was no occasion for further strategy. The trio were only too anxious to get away out of the zone of the deadly fire. With oaths loud and deep, it dawned upon them that the ponies were gone.

"It's an ambush!" the leader groaned. "It's all over with us, boys. Better put up your hands."

They stood there with hands uplifted, looking dejectedly miserable in the falling snow. But no answering voice bade them surrender, no further shots broke the silence. The stillness and the uncertainty of it all was perhaps more terrible than a volley of shots would have been.

Gradually their hands dropped, and presently, from her hiding-place, Grace could see two of the ruffians moving slowly away, carrying their wounded comrade with them. She had no fear that they would return; they would never risk the unseen danger again. Her heart was beating fast as she hurried to the tent and let down the flap behind her. Evershed lay bound upon the floor, his back towards her. She drew her hunting knife from its sheath and cut the raw-hide thongs. Evershed scrambled painfully to his feet.

"That was a close call," he gasped. "Those shots came just in time. I'm infinitely obliged to you. Why, it's a woman!"

"And one you have met before, Bruce."

"Grace!" he cried. "Now, I wonder what guardian angel sent you here just in the nick of time? Do you mean to say you came——"

His voice trailed away to a whisper. He was ill and weak, but the smile on his face and the look in his eyes was enough for Grace. He was glad, frankly and undisguisedly glad, to see her. On the impulse of the moment he stretched out his hands, and she snatched at them before he had time to withdraw them.

"Speak to me like that," she said. "Look at me as you are looking now, and I shall have courage to proceed. I don't want my pride to get the best of me now. Because Pete was right, Bruce. He said that you loved me and I loved you, and that we ought never to have parted. Because it's all beautifully true. I tried to make myself believe that it wasn't, but I was deceiving myself all the time. It has all turned out like some delightful romance. Pete broke his leg, and he managed to stop the *train* that I was on. Then he told me everything. He told me the danger you were in here, and, because there was no one to help me, I came alone. And in my heart of hearts I was glad that I was alone. And I feel proud of what I have done. It is the best way I can find of showing you how sorry I am. And I'm not going to ask you to forgive me, because you love me still, and it is not necessary."

"Oh, I shall wake up presently!" Evershed cried. "It's like some beautiful dream that comes to one during an illness. And do you really mean to say that you've come back here to stay?"

She reached her arms about his neck and laid her cheek lovingly against his.

"I've been longing for the chance ever since we parted," she confessed. "I'm quite cured, Bruce. I want nothing better than to be a good wife. That will be happiness enough for me. And now let me make you comfortable. Let me cook your food and make your coffee as I used to. Are there plenty of provisions? Splendid! So that we shall be quite right till help comes. And, do you know, I feel as if I was just beginning life to-day."

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AN APPEAL TO ARMS.

By T. D. MAXWELL.

'CONNOR knitted his brows, bit his lips, and scratched the place where his hair had become scattered, if not actually thin — in fact, he appeared to be thoroughly bewildered. And he was. It was a case—and a virulent one, though not yet a court case—of *cherchez la femme*, but not at all in the accepted sense of the term. The lady to be searched for was the prospective President of the Makara Free Gentlewomen's Unity, and there were several self-assertive claimants for the post.

Makara is, of course, a place of no little local importance, pleasantly situated on one of the richest rivers of the West African Cotton Coast Colony. Its inhabitants have during the last fifty years attained to a creditably high degree of civilisation—even of refinement. The principal men, under their head chief, the Aba, form, with and under the District Officer, as representative of the British Government, a town council, which has many judicial and executive functions and powers. Not to be outdone, the women, entirely on their own initiative, have formed what they call the Makara Free Gentlewomen's Unity. Its avowed objects are "the advancement of good manners and the expansion of kindly feelingness." They temper a not unsuccessful pursuit of both with a whole-hearted study of the fashion plates in the English ladies' papers. Their manners are, as a rule, excellent, and their "kindly feelingness" is very expansive. Their numbers —about thirty—are selected exclusively from those members of the leading families of the neighbourhood who have no drop of slave blood in their veins—that is to say, those ladies who are socially "quite quite."

Hitherto the Unity had had no history, and was—or should have been—consequently happy. But just recently there had been "a little rift within the lute." The President —an aunt of the Aba—had died, and there was much friction about the election of a new one. Several ladies announced themselves as being each the only possible successor, and each adduced her reasons at unnecessary and wholly perplexing length. At least, so thought O'Connor, the unfortunate District Officer, to whom the disunited Unity had repaired *en masse*, and to whom they had referred the matter.

Very excited, somewhat impolite, even openly spiteful, became some of the claimants and their adherents. Whatever good manners and "kindly feelingness" they had hitherto acquired seemed to have become a trifle frayed. With exemplary patience, O'Connor heard their arguments—if such they could be termed—but his efforts to secure some settlement were singularly unsuccessful. Feeling ran high, reputations were becoming tarnished—the daughters of West Africa know no Statute of Limitations in dealing with their sisters' pasts—and at last one of the candidates broke down and cried, not gently, as does a pretty plaintiff for the benefit of an English jury—and her own—but shrilly, reverberatingly, even as her grandmothers had howled but half a century ago in the depths of undiscovered forests.

O'Connor could stand no more. Overwork, quinine, and West Africa are a sufficiently nerve-trying trio without the added strain of an ululant negress. He therefore announced briefly and explicitly that they must all formulate some claims sufficiently definite to be heard in due form before the Makara Town Council, whose decision in the matter was, he ordered, to be final. Then he dismissed them, only too conscious that, if they remained longer, he would say things that would neither sound nor mean quite nice.

A few days later the cases came on for hearing. Some sort of pleadings had been filed. They would hardly have satisfied the requirements of the High Court of Justice, King's Bench Division, but they were locally sufficient, at all events, to start off with. It appeared to O'Connor at first as if every local gentlewoman was suing every other one for varyingly caused damages, but things soon straightened out. He opened the proceedings by explaining clearly that the

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Council had met that day solely to appoint a legally recognised President of the Makara Free Gentlewomen's Unity in succession to the late Mammy Aggabong, the respected aunt of the Aba, whose untimely demise he took the opportunity to deplore publicly —perhaps somewhat floridly—much to the satisfaction of her smilingly disconsolate nephew. He emphasised his determination to ignore any quarrels arising out of the recent unhappy disputes, as they had nothing to do with the case—like "The Flowers that Bloom in the Spring, tra-la!" flashed across his brain, and twitched his lips as he gazed at the utterly Gilbertian scene around him.

On his right sat the Aba, a plump, cheery-looking, very dignified old party, clad in a thing like a dressing-gown of black velveteen and silver paper, and wearing on his head his symbol of office, a broad-brimmed top-hat adorned with leopards' teeth and parrots' feathers. Just below sat some five-and-twenty other chiefs, sensible, solid gentlemen, rather uncomfortable at being called upon to adjudicate between sisters, wives, and "in-laws"; for in a proud and polygamous community such as Makara, everybody who is anybody is related by marriage several times over. In front of him were ranged the members of the Unity, stout, elderly negresses, flanked with innumerable attendants and relations. Their dresses were quaint, and probably the various fashion-plate artists concerned would have failed to recognise—certainly to acknowledge —the outcome of their designs. A few wore shoes, some just for the occasion, and on the wrong feet, and one youthful belle, in addition to a sky-blue satin skirt, had not only donned sand-shoes and a pair of men's heather-mixture football stockings, but had also hung her corsage with brittle, tinkling gewgaws destined originally for a Christmas tree.

But it is only for a few moments at a time that a European who knows his coast can return to the consciousness of the humorous appearance of his surroundings, and soon O'Connor had forgotten "The Mikado" and all its suggestions, and was hard at work hearing and sifting the evidence of the rival claimants.

It is quite immaterial even to outline it. Suffice it to say that, at the end of an hour or so, it was agreed to eliminate all but three of them, whose pretensions seemed more weighty than did those of any of the others, and to hear fully what each of those ladies had to say. Phew! How they talked! Intermarriages, third cousinships, divorces, affinities, separations, deaths, births, were alluded to, disputed, proved, or disproved: endless details of apparently utter and complete insignificance were dwelt upon, till out of chaos emerged some point which the chiefs seemed to think important.

O'Connor was almost too bewildered to be able to think at all, and then at last it was all over. According to invariable custom, he asked the Aba and the others to withdraw and consult together, and to submit their finding to him for formal approval. And very profoundly he determined to approve, without comment, whatever they suggested, and mentally vowed that never again would he be lured on to any interference with the economy of any ladies' club, society, unity, or whatever else it might call itself.

After a short interval—surprisingly and delightfully short, thought O'Connor—the chiefs returned and resumed their places. The Aba, as their spokesman, advanced.

"Are you all of one mind?" asked O'Connor.

"All," replied the Aba.

"Thank goodness!" he ejaculated under his breath, adding aloud: "And which of these three ladies do you recommend for the honourable and distinguished post of President of the Makara Free Gentlewomen's Unity?" He settled himself back in his chair, rather pleased at his own fine phrasing.

"You are our father and our mother," began the Aba, with apparent irrelevance. "We are all—even the oldest and wisest of us—but as little children in your hands."

O'Connor was used to elaborate prefacing, so he committed himself to nothing more than an evasive smile. "This is a difficult matter you have put before us. These three ladies—Mammy Eko, Mammy Frujinatu, and Mammy Gbogbo—are connected with us all both by marriage and by blood"—he bowed nervously towards each lady as he mentioned her, a courtesy that was received with three stony stares—"and who are we to choose between them? They are each worthy of the high honour which they claim. But little children cannot decide so strong a point"—O'Connor sat up sharply—"so we have made our decision, and a very good one it is, too—none, indeed, could be better," concluded the artful old coward. "We say that *you*, and you alone, shall decide this matter, and if the women do not agree to obey you, we will beat them."

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For the moment O'Connor felt inclined to explode, but the non-exhibition of his ruffled feelings in front of natives is an integral part of a White man's code of manners and of morals, so he restrained himself instinctively, and replied merely: "Good. My decision will be given here to-morrow morning. This meeting is now dismissed. Good day."

"They all pulled like heroes, grimly, sturdily."

A very uncomfortable time of it had O'Connor for the next few hours. He knew well that his decision, when promulgated, would mean a good deal to several worthy women, and he determined not to scamp it. He went through all the so-called "evidence" again, and manfully resisted the temptation to settle the whole matter by the toss of a coin. But no settlement could he achieve. In the evening he tried to dismiss the subject. He played out two long hands of patience, and re-read his last mail's newspapers; but haunting him amongst the cards or between the printed lines was the spectre of to-morrow's unsolved problem. At last,

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after a lonely dinner, he strolled almost automatically across to his favourite bookshelf and ran his eye idly along it. Suddenly he grabbed one battered volume—Stevenson's "Virginibus puerisque."

"Of course!" he exclaimed. "Bravo, Horace!"

Then he went to bed.

"I am here to give you my decision," he announced to the crowded and expectant court the next morning. "I have reached it after careful thought. She whom I select as President of the Makara Free Gentlewomen's Unity will remain so until her death—which I hope will be a long time off—or until she wishes to resign. She will be obeyed as such by the members of the Unity; she will be respected as such by every person in Makara, from the Aba downwards. Now, the woman who deserves best of all the inhabitants is, of course, she whose children and whose children's children are most numerous, most obedient, and most healthy, whose boys will make the most useful men, and whose girls will become the best mothers in the town. Mammy Eko, Mammy Frujinatu, Mammy Gbogbo, come forward, please. You have heard the chiefs say they are unable to decide between you. Now hear me. Your people have all, I know, come in from far and near to hear about this matter. Have either of you any children or children's children who are not in the town to-day?"

"I have," wailed one old lady.

"Where are they?" asked O'Connor, momentarily rather nonplussed.

"Dead!" she whimpered. "They were dead, most of them, when you were in your mother's arms."

"Ah, I am sorry! But to-day we will think only of the living and of the future. Now, then, each of you must collect all your offspring; let them all assemble here at four o'clock this afternoon—men, women, youths, maidens, and babies. I will see them, and on them will depend this matter. Let the women and the girls bring examples of their handiwork—no matter what—and the men and boys the same. Anyone who tries to deceive by bringing the work of another as his own will draw disgrace upon that family, and will ruin that mammy's chance of success."

At four o'clock O'Connor found that it was no easy task he had set himself. Each old lady brought some fifty descendants of all sizes and ages, and on his arrival was sitting ensconced in their midst, blandly but breathlessly awaiting developments.

To each "exhibit"—it was the only comprehensive term to apply to them—he determined to award ten marks as a maximum, and forthwith, armed with a note-book, he began his circuit. The men and boys from each group he examined first. Those who had brought any specimens of their work he contrasted carefully—carpenter against carpenter, cooper against cooper, even washerman against washerman. It was horribly difficult, but it was useless to shirk the business then. Those men or boys who had brought nothing he made run races or wrestle.

Then, in some trepidation, he turned to the ladies. The mothers came first with their babies—nice, sleek, bright-eyed little objects. It was hard not to give each one full marks, simply because it looked so nice and didn't howl. Then suddenly, for some reason—or for none—one did start howling, and immediately set all the others off, and it was equally impossible to cancel all their marks. Then on to the other women and girls, most of whom produced weaving, netting, or some similarly useful work. Others showed their skill in expressing palm-oil from the kernel into hastily-improvised tubs; two even produced dishes of their cooking. Those who had brought nothing had either to sing or run races, or to do some one definite thing to earn their marks. There only remained at length the tiny children, wee things from three to six, barely fledged and certainly unfeathered—a smile or an occasional bracelet was the extent of their wardrobe. From each mammy's group emerged some ten or twelve, shyly but excitedly, for family feeling was running high.

But O'Connor was momentarily exhausted, and insisted on a few minutes' rest, to smoke a cigarette and to check the marks. The result seemed to give him some anxiety, for it read: Mammy Eko, 420 marks; Mammy Frujinatu, 420 marks; Mammy Gbogbo, 362 marks. Mammy Gbogbo was clearly out of the running. She had reversed the usual order of Nature, and was paying for the sins of her grandsons, some of whom trousered, pseudo-"educated" things, too superior for manual labour, too ignorant for clerical work, had lost her many marks.

He was sorry for the old lady—she had such a jolly fat smile—but there still remained the selection of one of the other two. So he called up the infants of all three parties, marked Mammy Gbogbo's as high as he possibly could, and then tried to adjudicate

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between the other two. It was perfectly impossible. Seven little girls and five small boys was Mammy Eko's exhibit; five small girls and seven little boys was Mammy Frujinatu's. They were all shy, all well fed, all sleek, and all had obviously been cleaned up for the occasion.

He then publicly announced the state of the poll, and suggested that there should be a tug-of-war between the twelve small mites of either family, and that to the winning side should go the coveted presidentship. Mercifully, his suggestion was received with acclamation. A rope was produced, and the combatants were arranged and instructed what to do. Not one of them had the faintest notion of the art of tugging. They used only the muscles of their wrists and elbows, and were as unsteady on their feet as thistledown.

Mammy Eko and Mammy Frujinatu, palpitating with excitement, hovered about their grandchildren, encouraging, warning, and advising—all wrong. Suddenly Mammy Gbogbo, possibly without much "kindly feelingness," suggested that they too should each join in. To O'Connor's surprise, they both promptly assented.

What followed is indescribable. Imagine a very ample, very short-skirted negress of five or six-and-fifty pulling hard at a rope, with a dozen grandchildren and great-grandchildren behind her, while every competitor and every onlooker squealed their very loudest.

At first there was a false start, and each old lady lost her footing and subsided backwards on to a hastily-rescued infant or two.

The next time everything went well. They all pulled like heroes, grimly, sturdily, until at last, to the accompaniment of a deafening yi-hiying, yowling, howling, and general hullabaloo, one side did manage to pull the other across the dividing line before it collapsed in a heap. Exhausted with the unaccustomed exertion, overpowered with emotion and congratulations, the winner was forthwith publicly proclaimed as henceforth President of the Makara Free Gentlewomen's Unity.

And very successfully she has for a long time filled that office.

FLYING SOUTH.

LISTEN to the wild duck crying,
Crying, crying, overhead,
Through November darkness flying,
Flying, flying, far outspread.

Thousands through the storm wind hieing,
Coming whence, and whither led?
What is it impels them, crying,
Crying, crying, overhead?

"Nature leads them in their flying,
To a southern winter sped."
Thus we say, and hear them crying,
Crying, crying, overhead.

Nothing more, for all our trying,
Do we know when that is said,
Cannot tell what speeds them crying,
Crying, crying, overhead.

But we know that they are flying,
Flying, flying, far outspread,
Like ourselves, in darkness crying,
"Coming whence, and whither led?"

MARIAN HOCKLIFFE.

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Miss Marsden Practises Economy.

By M. M. OYLER.

"NOT at home," said the man, in answer to my query.

"But," I protested, "Miss Marsden said she would be in this afternoon."

"Miss Marsden is not at home," he repeated firmly.

So there was nothing for it but to take my departure.

At the bottom of the steps I remembered I had promised, in a vague sort of way, to look up a young cousin of the Steevenses, who was living somewhere in Lincoln's Inn, reading for the Bar, and I got out my pocket-book to turn up his address. While engaged in doing this, I heard a voice at my elbow—

"Beg pardon, sir, but Miss Marsden will see you." And I turned to find the Marsdens' butler standing beside me.

"Very well," I replied evenly; and, to discount any eagerness I may have shown previously, I finished turning over the pages until I found the address I required before following him into the house in my most dignified manner.

I was shown into Miss Marsden's study. The idea of Miss Marsden and a study in any connection whatever seems a little odd; but about two years ago, when Dick Reynolds's regiment was ordered to India, I think it must have been—or was it when that Evans boy decided to take a cattle-ranch in Australia?—I really forget which—she decided that she was leading an idle, hollow life, and started ideals and deep reading and that sort of thing, as well as joining an essay club, one rule of which was that every member was bound to contribute an essay on a given subject once every fortnight; failure to comply with this rule entailed a fine of two shillings and sixpence. The subjects of these essays were never divulged to me, spite of my most eloquent persuasions; but I once caught a glimpse of a large sheet of foolscap on her desk with the heading, "The Affinity of Souls," from which I drew my own conclusions. I do not think she overwhelmed the club with the quantity of her essays, but I do think she must have rendered it considerable financial assistance with her fines. Having joined for a year, she was liable to a fine every fortnight during that time that an essay was not forthcoming, and to the best of my belief, after the first month, not another one was sent in by her. That was, of course, after Ronald Crawford appeared on the scene. All the books, too, with which she had lined her study walls and covered every available space on her study tables were shut up and forgotten—have been, in fact, ever since. He was an essentially out-of-door man, who never even looked at a book—Ronald Crawford, I mean.

It was into the study I was ushered on this occasion, to find it in a condition of absolute chaos. Miss Marsden was sitting in a low chair near the fire, surrounded by what looked, to my inexperienced eye, the gleanings from a naturalist's shop. Bits of feathers and fur, heads and tails of animals, strewed the chairs, tables, and even overflowed on to the floor; little glass eyes peeped at me from unexpected places, and I was almost afraid to move lest I should unwittingly tread on some priceless specimen of bird's egg which might be concealed under some of the other specimens lying about. It subsequently transpired that there were no birds' eggs, but at the time I did not know this.

"How do you do?" said Miss Marsden, looking up from her occupation, whatever it was, and hastily resuming it. "Do you know, I'd nearly forgotten you had said you were coming this afternoon."

"Really," I answered, at the same time looking round in vain for a vacant chair. "If you hadn't explained, I should have almost imagined, from Barnes's manner, that you had *quite* forgotten I was coming."

Miss Marsden looked at me a trifle suspiciously, but my expression completely disarmed her, and she decided to let it pass.

"I didn't know," I said, "that you were learning taxidermy. Is it very difficult?"

"Whoever told you I was?" she exclaimed. "I only wish it were true. But, you know, dad won't even let me drive our

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own car, worse luck, so imagine his expression if I asked him to let me drive a taxi!" And she laughed.

"I think," I said gently, "that if you spent a little more time on improving your mind by reading instructive books, and a little less in studying the most fashionable ways of doing your hair, it would save you the humiliation of displaying on occasions an ignorance which would disgrace a schoolboy of fourteen. A taxidermist, I may tell you, is a person who is in nowise connected with a motor-car; he is a man who stuffs animals and birds, and that sort of thing."

I like to see Miss Marsden really roused, and awaited the result of my speech with interest. She always starts by becoming a delicious pink colour.

"Do you mean to say," she gasped out, "that you actually thought I didn't know the difference between a taxi-driver and a taxider-der-dermist?" The last part of this word, I must tell you, was slightly mumbled. "Of course, I knew all the time; I was only joking—you must have known I was."

"You didn't *look* as if you were joking," I answered gravely; "you looked perfectly serious."

"That was all part of the joke," she insisted. "Of course I knew."

"Oh!" I remarked briefly and without conviction.

"Don't you believe I did?" she persisted.

"Well, if you say you did——" I began doubtfully.

"No," she said decidedly, "that is no good at all. Either you believe me, or you don't, and if you don't—well, hadn't you better not stay? You can't possibly want to stop and talk to anyone who tells stories." The pathetic break which comes into her voice in these affairs always unmans me, and, as usual, I capitulated.

"Of course I believe you," I lied bravely. "Surely you must have guessed I only pretended not to 'just for fun,' as the children say. As if I should really imagine you wouldn't know what such an everyday thing as a taxidermist was!" I flatter myself I did it rather well; anyhow, Miss Marsden was appeased to the extent of two dimples and the suggestion of a third.

"Why don't you sit down?" she asked, after a moment, without looking up.

"I should love to," I replied. "I really am getting very tired, but"—looking round as I spoke—"there doesn't seem to be a single disengaged chair."

Miss Marsden leant forward and swept a mass of feathers, fur, and twisted wire into a chaotic heap on the floor.

"I'm sorry it isn't tidier," she apologised, "but I really am very busy. Oh, take care! Don't sit on that mount!"

I drew back hastily from the chair I was about to appropriate.

"What on earth's a mount?" I asked.

"Give it to me, please," she said impatiently. "This is a mount. Now you can sit down." And I thankfully obeyed.

"I hadn't learnt before," I remarked, "that a portion of dead pheasant with feathers on it was called a mount. How do you account for it? Why is it a mount?"

"It isn't dead pheasant," retorted Miss Marsden; "there's no dead pheasant about it. It's only feathers made into a mount—a hat mount, you know."

"No," I said meekly, "I didn't know, but I shall in future. And now that we have settled that point, perhaps you will tell me what you are so busy doing with all these animals and birds?"

She looked at me for a few seconds without answering, and then said with great solemnity—

"I am making a hat—not trimming, but actually *making* it. Of course, I shall trim it afterwards," she added.

"How awfully clever of you!" I said, affecting great astonishment. "I didn't know people could make hats; I thought hats were things that were born, and not made—at least, only in factories and that sort of place."

Miss Marsden smiled in a superior way.

"It's really not a bit difficult," she explained; "in fact, the book says it is perfectly easy if the directions are accurately followed. I have got them here"—pointing to a highly-coloured journal with about a column and a half devoted to "Modish Hats and How to Make Them." "Look, these are the illustrations." And she showed me a series of diagrams demonstrating the evolution of what appeared to be a rather uncertain-looking saucepan into, to use her own expression, "the last word in hats—absolutely IT!"

"It looks very nice," I said lamely, "but do you think you'll ever be able to make it look like that?"

Miss Marsden was trying with frantic efforts to coerce what appeared to be a sort of handleless saucepan, made of white canvas stuff and wire, into a state of subjection, so she did not reply for some time. Then she said sadly—

"Don't you think it is a little unkind of you to try and crush my laudable attempts

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at economy? You so often accuse me of extravagance, and now, when I'm trying to save money, you only laugh at me." And here the woebegone look reappeared.

"I didn't mean that at all," I interposed hastily. "Of course, it's very jolly and all that, only it seems to me so horribly difficult."

"Well, one can but try"—with a resigned expression. "But"—unbending a little—"I'll tell you what started me. You know Alison French, and how smart she always looks? Well, her sister Marjorie told me this morning that she makes all of her own hats herself. Just think of it—*all* of them!"

"Wonderful!" I ejaculated.

"Yes," she went on enthusiastically, "you can imagine what that saves, if you buy the things cheaply and run them up yourself at home."

"Rather!" I agreed. "I suppose you get all these things"—indicating the collection of fur and feathers scattered about—"for practically nothing? It's the making, is it, that costs so much?"

"Well, n-o-o-o, not frightfully cheap, because, of course, I don't know yet quite the best places to go for that sort of thing; but"—brightening up—"I shall soon learn, I think. Anyhow, I never mean to have a hat trimmed for me again if I can help it."

"Bravo!" I said.

There was silence for some time after this, broken only by the clicking of Miss Marsden's needle as she pushed it in and out of the stiff canvas of the distorted hat shape. Suddenly she uttered a sharp exclamation.

"What is it?" I asked anxiously.

"I've broken my needle and pricked my finger! Oh, dear, it *does* hurt! Oh!"

"Poor little girl!" I said. "Let me look at it."

She held up a small, pathetic pink finger for my inspection, with a tiny puncture near the tip.

"It feels rather better now," she said bravely. "I think I can manage to go on again."

"Do you think you ought to? Besides, your needle is broken. How can you?"

"Why, how silly you are!"—scornfully. "I've got hundreds more. Did you think I only possessed one?"

"I didn't know they were the sort of thing you kept a lot of," I explained. "Ladies always seem to make such a fuss over a lost needle. I thought they must be very valuable."

After anxiously consulting the "Modish Hats" column, "Whatever does 'base the two edges firmly together' mean?" Miss Marsden asked.

"I haven't an idea," I said. "Are you sure it says 'baste'?"

By way of answer she passed me over the book.

"I can at least *read* correctly"—this with a reproachful look.

It certainly did say "baste," and I had no suggestion to offer.

"The only kind of basting I've ever heard of," she remarked, "is something to do with cooking. They baste meat, whatever that means."

"It can't be that, of course," I decided. And then I had an inspiration—one of those illuminating ideas that come to one once or twice in a lifetime. "I know what it is," I almost shouted. "We might have guessed it. It is a printer's error, of course. It means paste, not baste—'paste the two edges firmly together.'"

"Why, yes"—in a relieved tone from Miss Marsden—"that's it. How clever of you to think of it! But how"—with a worried look—"can I possibly paste fur?"

This was another problem, and one even more difficult of solution.

"I don't think I should. Couldn't you—er—pin it or fix it in some other way?" I suggested.

"I think I might try sewing it," she answered doubtfully. "Paste is such horridly sticky stuff. I wish my finger didn't hurt so," she added mournfully.

"Don't you think you'd better stop?" I asked. "You don't want to make it worse."

"No," she answered, "it is very nearly finished. It won't take much longer. I must just bear the pain"—this with the air of an early Christian martyr.

For about five minutes Miss Marsden plied her needle busily, then with an air of determination she rose.

"I am going to try it on now," she said, but her voice lacked enthusiasm. "I don't believe it is going to look a bit like the one in 'Modish Hats.'"

Having produced two long hatpins from among the *débris* on the floor, she cautiously fixed the elaborate structure of fur and feathers on to her dainty little head. The effect was, to say the least of it, surprising. Never before or since have I beheld a hat so weirdly grotesque in form and shape. For about twenty seconds I manfully essayed, with Miss Marsden's accusing eyes upon me, to control my features, but from the outset

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"Never before or since have I beheld a hat so weirdly grotesque in form and shape."

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it was a task beyond me, and, after one last effort, I broke into a loud guffaw.

For a moment she looked at me in profound astonishment, which was immediately followed by a look of disgust, then, without saying a word, she turned and left the room.

Left to myself, I was able to give way to my merriment, which amusement, however, began to pall after a while, and I was seriously contemplating taking my departure, hoping that, if I absented myself for a few days, Miss Marsden might have time to overlook, in some slight degree, the heinousness of my offence, when, to my surprise, the door opened and she appeared, dressed in walking attire.

"I think," she said slowly, as she walked across the room and picked up the offending "Modish Hats," "that it ought to be a punishable offence to publish articles giving directions how to make things, which are wrong from beginning to end, don't you?"

"I certainly do," I assented gravely, taking the paper from her and crumpling it into a ball. "For my part, I should advocate hanging."

"I am going out now," Miss Marsden continued, "to buy a hat in Bond Street. My next one"—looking at me defiantly—"I shall probably get from Paris." Then with a change of tone: "Oh, Martin, I am so tired, and my finger hurts dreadfully! Do take me somewhere nice to tea."

So, of course, we went.

THE FUGITIVE.

BEHIND the leaves that are softly falling,
Spring is playing at hide-and-seek;
Under her foot a flower has blossomed;
I felt her fragrant breath on my cheek.

I caught the sound of her muffled laughter
Down by the streamlet hid from view;
But I only saw the gleam of her garment
Up above me in fields of blue.

The thrushes sing in the golden orchard,
For joy at hearing her fairy tread;
But St. Michael's daisies, in pale half-mourning,
Know that Summer is over and dead.

A passing guest in the chamber of Autumn,
Spring peeps out with a mockery sweet;
An instant only, and then to the swallow
Away she hastens with flying feet!

J. M. KRAUSE.

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ENGLAND'S STORY IN PORTRAIT AND PICTURE.

XXXV. THE REIGNS OF GEORGE IV. AND WILLIAM IV.

1820–1837.

AS we approach a century from our own day, the figures of the great men seem not more familiar, but almost less like those we know. Human nature, in politics as well as in morals, may have been the same, but the outward signs of feeling were very different. The only woman's question was that painful one of Caroline of Brunswick, which disfigured the first years of her husband's reign. The only social question, it seemed, was whether the old industries should be continued, not whether men could live by the old or the new. It needed the noble life of a queen regnant to give vitality to the first question, and the enthusiasm of Disraeli and the Young England Party to initiate the second.

GEORGE IV., KING OF ENGLAND 1820–1830.
BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A.
From the original now in the National Gallery at Rome.

George IV. ascended the throne on which, it may be said, he had long sat as Regent. The first event that marked his accession was the Cato Street Conspiracy to murder the ministers, for which Arthur Thistlewood and several others were executed. Political eminence had already become dangerous again: for the last century only lunatics had attempted the murder of politicians. The next event was the trial of Queen Caroline. She had been separated from her husband—whom she had married in 1795—since 1814. They had but one child, the beloved Princess Charlotte of Wales, brought up in England. The king had determined that his wife should never be queen. She came to England and attempted to force herself into the gorgeous coronation, but in vain. A party was formed to support her. It was joined by discontented Whigs and lawyers "on the make." But it could do nothing, though backed by outbursts

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of popular enthusiasm in the streets, for a woman who could do so much against herself. Queen Caroline had everything in her favour, for no one respected her husband; but she lost everything through her own folly. The trial, which was brought about by the bill for divorce, was carried through with difficulty, and then it was abandoned. It became evident that she would be her own worst enemy. She quarrelled with her defenders, and her friends deserted her. She died soon afterwards.

The coronation was the finest spectacle

parents—gave splendour to this revival of customs long gone by. George himself was at first popular wherever he was not known. At Dublin he said to the multitude: "Rank, station, and honours are nothing, but to feel that I live in the hearts of my Irish subjects is exalted happiness." At Edinburgh he was more restrained, but hardly less complimentary, though he committed the error of dressing as a Highlander in the capital of the Lowlands. But in England he was well known, and he was not able to exercise any serious influence on the government of the

"THE CORONATION OF GEORGE IV., 1821." BY J. STEPHANOFF AND AUGUSTUS PUGIN.

London had seen for centuries. George III. had complained of defects when he was crowned, and had been assured, with tactlessness or humour, that all should be right the next time. So it was, for George IV. was a master of ceremonial. The coronation itself was dignified above the religious usage of the age, and the coronation banquet in Westminster Hall, with the hereditary champion of England throwing down the gauntlet, and the peers waited upon by their eldest sons—who spent more time in looking at the show and helping themselves at the sideboards than in attending to their hungry

country. It was the old story of English history over again. George III., painfully built up, by means not always scrupulous, by personal influence and bribery, direct and indirect, a real power for the Crown; George IV. let it go without a struggle. So Edward II. had lost what Edward I. achieved, and James I. undid the work of great Elizabeth. Fears of the autocracy of kings are illusory—at least, in England. Genius is not hereditary, nor is the power to sit quiet and rule; the balance adjusts itself, and, when the country has a wise sovereign, she would do well to make use

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of him to the full. Under George IV. and William IV. the monarchy retired more and more into the background. The public appearances of both kings, indeed, were disasters. The feastings of George IV. at Brighton, and the slapping people on the back by William IV. in Piccadilly, did more harm to the monarchy than decades of autocracy to the people. At best these reigns were but a preparation for the great reign of Victoria, the founder of a new tradition of devotion to the public weal.

The accession of George IV. came at the height of a reaction against democracy. Abroad the French Revolution seemed dead, and the era of benevolent despotism restored, with an added touch of Nationalist and philanthropic sentiment. English ministers shared in not a few of the foreign ideas. Castlereagh's great aim at the Congress which reconstituted Europe was, next to the suppression of Republicanism, the suppression of slavery. The end of the struggle with Napoleon seemed to give new force to the fight of the ancient monarchies against democracy. What English Tory statesmen felt has been expressed most accurately by Mr. J. W. Fortescue: "Democracy at best is only an experiment, which, if constructed upon false principles, must inevitably break down. And [when it is said these statesmen were against the 'spirit of the age'] may not the spirit of the age be a lying spirit; or, rather, is it possible among such beings as ourselves that it should ever be a wholly true spirit? Why should it be accepted as synonymous with reason, and acclaimed as infallible? If *vox populi* were *vox Dei*, we should long ago have ascertained truths after which we still grope in vain. If the spirit of the age dictates that the wise and the foolish, the weak and the strong, the able and the incapable, are for political purposes all alike, might not the shades of Liverpool, Perceval, and Castlereagh say: 'This is a lying spirit, and we shall resist it. You blame us for not removing Catholic disabilities. Were not these very disabilities imposed likewise in obedience to the spirit of the age? Why should this new spirit be any more true?'"

CAROLINE OF BRUNSWICK, CONSORT OF GEORGE IV.
BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A.

Of the statesmen whom Mr. Fortescue thus imagines replying to the democratic critic, one was dead years before George IV. ascended the throne, but his spirit survived, and so, if attenuated, did the principles of Pitt. To the two others two more names must be added, if we are to understand the political forces of the time. To Liverpool and Castlereagh we must add Canning and Wellington. Lord Liverpool

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was described by Disraeli as an "arch-mediocrity." He was, indeed, one of those who went far to give the Tory Party a name bad enough to hang it. He was Prime Minister for over fifteen years: only Walpole and Pitt accomplished the same feat. They were not mediocrities, so perhaps his mediocrity was gilded. He was an experienced man and an honest one, and though Palmerston called him a "spoony," he was "the minister whose Government overthrew Napoleon and concluded a peace which lasted over forty years." If he was not a man of great achievement himself, he knew how to reward as well as to profit by the great achievements of others, and chiefly those of Wellington. At the accession of George IV. the great Duke had not shown himself the masterful politician which he afterwards became, or revealed the strictness of his Tory principles; but he was willing to give a general support to the Government, and there is no doubt that this was a source of great strength. It did not tell against so successful a general that he regarded men with a certain icy intellectual contempt. Castlereagh has been, from his own time, more misrepresented than any other modern statesman. Says Mr. Thornfield: "In Ireland his name stands for the cruelty with which the rebellion of 1798 was repressed, and the corruption with which the Union was carried; in England it stands for the Six Acts and the policy they represented; in Europe for the Holy Alliance. When he died, the country

CASTLEREAGH, AFTERWARDS MARQUIS OF LONDONDERRY. BY M. GANCI.

THE HAYLOFT PLOT OF THISTLEWOOD TO MASSACRE THE CABINET MINISTERS OF GEORGE IV., 1820: THE ARREST OF THE CONSPIRATORS IN CATO STREET, EDGWARE ROAD, W.

From a contemporary print.

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THE EARL OF LIVERPOOL.
BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A.

GEORGE CANNING.
BY T. STEWARDSON.

SIR ROBERT PEEL.
BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A.

LORD MELBOURNE.
BY SIR GEORGE HAYTER, R.A.

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rejoiced: when he was buried, the mob of Westminster cheered in triumph." But he was a statesman of very high rank. He had a thorough knowledge of politics, Continental and domestic, and he had reasoned principles, not illiberal, but strong, unselfish, and in many respects far-seeing beyond his contemporaries. It is always difficult to judge the reasons for or against repression, but if Castlereagh's policy involved, as it did, severe restrictions on public liberty, it must be remembered that England escaped the upheaval which abroad led to untold suffering and little, if any, amelioration of the conditions of industrial life. He well deserves the praise that "he did what he thought right, without attention to the labels that might be fixed to his known opinions, made no parade, and claimed no credit." The same judge has said, somewhat unjustly, that "Canning was not quite a gentleman, and was, above all, a man of brilliant talent. He was, therefore, quite incapable of appreciating what was great in Castlereagh; and Castlereagh, being such as he was, could hardly have helped perceiving the littleness in Canning. The two men were by nature antipathetic towards each other, and it is not surprising that they quarrelled." They had fought a duel, indeed, already; and Mr. Fortescue adds: "The reputation of Canning is the greater, unjustly, as I think. It was Castlereagh, and not Canning, who tided us over the worst of the war." That war was over, and Canning, who had been out of office from 1810 to 1815, during the critical years, was one of the great figures of the later Georgian age,

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TURCO-EGYPTIAN FLEET IN THE BATTLE OF NAVARINO, 1827.
From a contemporary print.

a man of great literary ability, but also of genuine patriotism and cosmopolitan enthusiasm, a political genius of the first rank, with large ideas and wide appreciation. There were many Tories who acknowledged no other leader: he seemed to revive the ideas and the genius of Pitt.

The year 1822 was a crisis in English politics which has hardly received the notice it deserves. In that year Canning was offered the great office of Governor-General of India, and was on the point of sailing for the East. In that year Castlereagh, overstrained by work in which he had never

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spared himself, took his own life. In that year Robert Peel first entered the Government.

Canning left the ministry because he could not agree with his colleagues about the conduct of the queen's trial, and Peel was offered, but declined, his place. A few months later the Grenville section of the Tories —they were really Whigs by intellectual descent—joined the Government, and then Peel accepted the office of Home Secretary. The king's great reluctance to accept Canning as a minister was overcome, and he became Leader of the House of Commons. Till his death he was, to all intents and purposes, Prime Minister, and he had changed the whole foreign policy of the country.

The period from 1822 to 1827 saw England for the first time definitely on the side of liberty and nationalism overseas. Canning was able to act in spite of the inferiority of his subordinates. When he determined to aid the peoples of Europe against the Holy Alliance of repressive monarchs, he could follow in the steps of Castlereagh, who had definitely stated that the absolutist policy of Austria, Russia, and Prussia was "in direct repugnance to the fundamental laws of England." In Portugal he prevented European interference. In Greece, with the aid of Russia, he enabled a great step towards national independence to be taken, and the battle of Navarino (after his death) destroyed

DANIEL O'CONNELL. BY T. CARRICK.

EARL GREY. BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE, P.R.A.

the Turkish fleet (October 27, 1827). In Spain he did as much as was possible to balance the dangers of French interference. In South America he secured the independence of the new republics and monarchies which were springing up, thus beginning, with what was perhaps questionable wisdom, a new departure in the history of the world, and calling, in his own somewhat grandiloquent language, "a New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old."

Beside Canning in the reconstituted ministry was Peel, who carried through a great reform of the criminal law. When men could be hanged for more than two hundred breaches of the law, a certain recklessness set in and crime increased everywhere. Forgery was by the far the commonest of all offences for which men died, and they could be hanged also for "breaking down the head of a fishpond, being found on the highway with a blackened face, injuring Westminster Bridge, or personating out-pensioners of Greenwich Hospital." Peel at a blow abolished half the capital offences, and the influence of the great artist Cruick-shank, one may almost say, completed the reform.

Financial reform, under the able direction of Huskisson, followed, and great steps were taken towards Free Trade. It seemed that the Tories, under Canning, were going hard in the direction of Liberalism, and had gone

far beyond the Whigs. This was indeed true. The old Tories withdrew when Liverpool died, and Canning was Prime Minister (February, 1827). He lived hardly six months, but he had stamped an impress on his country and his party which has never been obliterated. The friend of the great men of letters of his day, and the disciple of Pitt, he was, even in the opinion of his opponent, the clever Whig lawyer, Brougham, "an orator, a wit, a poet, and a statesman."

WILLIAM IV., KING OF ENGLAND 1830-1837. BY SIR MARTIN ARCHER SHEE.

A short, ineffective ministry under Lord Goderich followed. Mr. Gladstone, in his old age, wrote an interesting account of it. Then the great Duke of Wellington became Prime Minister, and ruled the country for two years, with the assistance of Peel as Home Secretary. These two years saw most important legislative changes, far-reaching indeed in their significance, in the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and the grant of Roman Catholic emancipation. The former two Acts, relics of the persecutions under Charles II., when Dissenters and Roman Catholics alike were incapable of political rights, were easily swept away by the Tory ministry. The Whigs had never cared to attempt it, being devoted rather to talking about liberty than to procuring it.

The story of Roman Catholic emancipation is as long a one, but infinitely more bitter. George III. thought that to grant it would be a breach of his coronation oath. George IV. professed to be equally determined, though it is not improbable that he had been actually married to the Roman Catholic Mrs. Fitzherbert. But the claims of Ireland at length grew too strong to be resisted, and there was a strong man to express them in the person of Daniel O'Connell. The crisis was reached when, in 1828, he was returned for County Clare, though he was unable to take his seat. Peel saw that civil war could only be avoided by yielding, and Wellington came to see it too. Roman Catholics were allowed to sit in Parliament. It was the beginning of a new, as much as the end of an old, agitation.

Now that Canning was gone, the three chief figures in English public life were Wellington, Peel, and O'Connell. Caricaturists will not let us forget the marked

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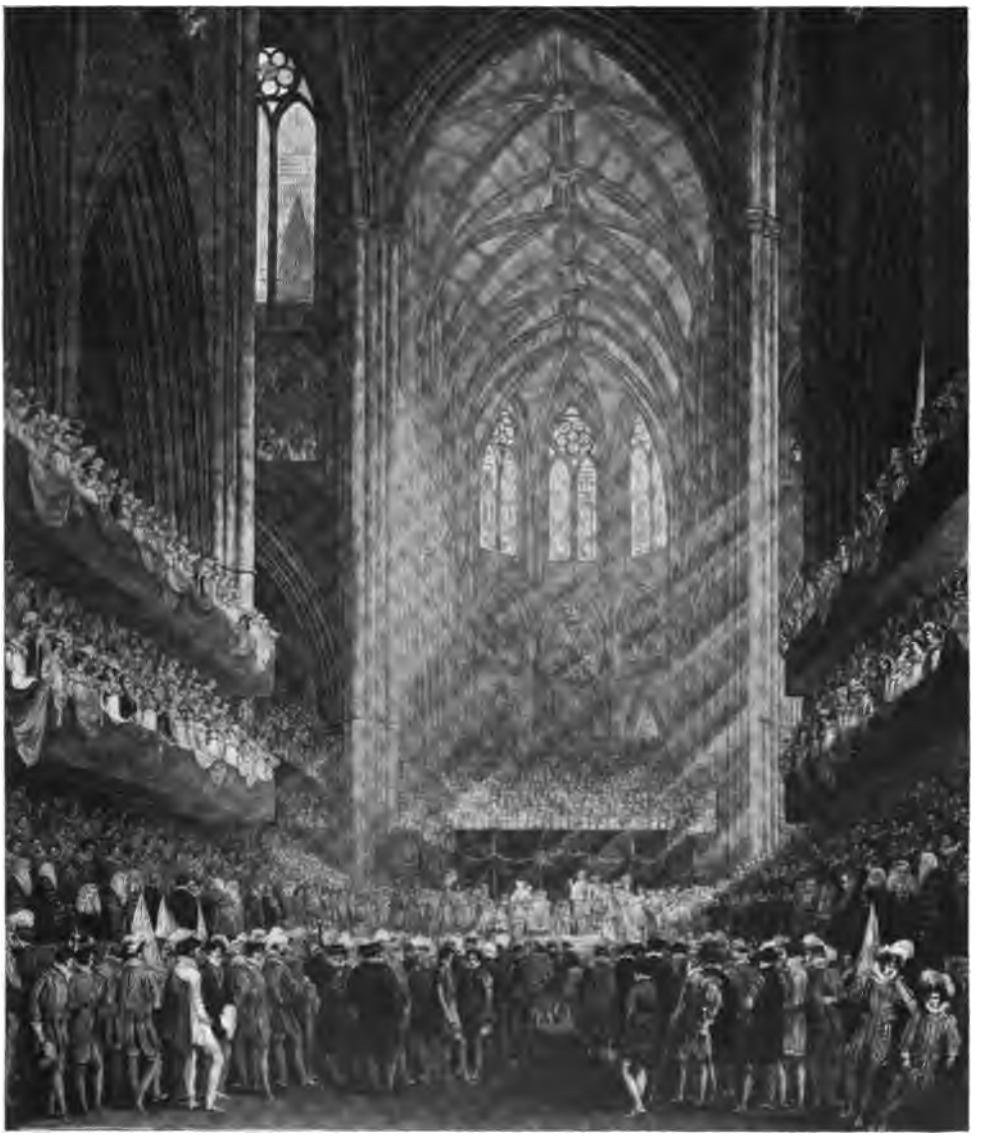
features of each—the little, dapper, high-nosed soldier, the placid, kindly English squire, the huge mountain of flesh from which peeped the sharp eyes of the Irishman. Those were the days when Peel abolished the old watch—the Dogberry and Verges of past centuries—and formed the English police force, whose members were nicknamed, after him, Bobbies or Peelers. O'Connell, too, had his "police"—a mob of wild and ragged Dublin men. Says Mr. W. S. Trench, in his "Realities of Irish Life," of this time: "One of the rules this strange police insisted on establishing was that all those walking in the streets should take off their hats as O'Connell passed by on his triumphal return from the courts; and anyone who refused was mercilessly mobbed, and his hat knocked off or forced down over his eyes. In general, for peace sake, most of the passers-by took this new order of things good-humouredly, and raised their hats



THE CORONATION OF WILLIAM IV., 1830.

From a contemporary engraving.

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rather than submit to the unpleasant consequences of a refusal. But the college lads generally resisted this homage, so that a fight was almost certain to take place whenever they and O'Connell's police chanced to meet in the streets." Dublin became the city of free fights. And so liberty was achieved for Ireland. It was not so easy to obtain it for England.

As regards Roman Catholic emancipation, it was won. Even the king yielded, and "in a single session Peel and Wellington overcame the resistance of a hostile sovereign, a hostile Church, a hostile House of Lords, and a public opinion fast growing hostile." was a new party arising—its aims can be read in Disraeli's earlier novels—which was determined to mend not only the politics but the social life of the nation. The first point in the programme was one which Pitt long ago had foreseen, and which even a duke had suggested in an extreme form—the need of Parliamentary reform.

On June 26, 1830, George IV. died. Perhaps no one mourned him except the good and pretty little girl, his niece, who was, after a single reign, to succeed him—the child who remembered, to the end of her long life, how he had received her in something like state, and said to her, "Give

"THE DESTRUCTION OF THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT BY FIRE, 1834." BY M. GANCI.

When this is said, it is only fair to add that the bishops voted for the bill, and so did a large majority of the Lords. But the success of the measure meant the end of the Government. Wellington was an old Tory to the backbone, and when George IV. died, and the Bourbons were again driven from the throne in France, he fell before the new force which was slowly coming to the front. It is curious to read, in the diaries and letters of the day, how little the Whig lords and gentlemen, at their banquetings and balls and struggles for place, understood that there was a new power arising to sweep them, even more effectually than Toryism had done, from their seats. Nor did the old Tories understand any better. But there

me your little paw," and how she herself had told him that her favourite tune was "God save the King." His sailor-brother, William, Duke of Clarence, who had married Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen, became king. He seemed at first to have lost his wits from sheer joy; and the odd things he said at dinner-parties, and the odd things he did in the streets, were in everybody's mouth. But he was determined to be popular, and let people know that he favoured the Whigs.

On November 15, 1830, Wellington's Government resigned, and Earl Grey, who had long headed the movement for Parliamentary reform, became Prime Minister. The election consequent on the king's death had given him a majority. He had the

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cleverest but the most unstable lawyer of the day, Brougham, for Lord Chancellor, and Lord Althorp for Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. Underneath the agreement in public there was, as diaries like Creevy's show, a good deal of intrigue and anger, as well as a good deal of overeating and vulgar affectation behind the scenes in the houses of the great statesmen of the day. But the people were determined at last to have political rights, and the Whigs were pledged to give them.

The anomalies of our Parliamentary system were indeed grotesque and scandalous. There were great cities which had no representation, little villages which had two members. Old Sarum and Grampound were names to mock at. There were boroughs to which peers or great landowners could nominate, others in which the longest purse, quite irrespective of politics, was sure to win. Not all these abuses were abolished by the Reform Bill, but at least a good start was made. All boroughs with less than two thousand inhabitants were disfranchised, and all under four thousand were restricted to one member. The counties had more members given, and the great towns, some never represented before, were given their proper share in the Parliament. It was a great measure, but it took two years to get it through Parliament. Twice did the Lords reject the bill. Then public feeling rose to fever height. Riots all over the country threatened a revolution. Wellington saw that to resist meant civil war, and again he yielded to the storm. As he had induced the Lords, among whom he was supreme, to accept Emancipation, now, with strong pressure from the king, he induced them to accept reform. The third bill, introduced by Lord John Russell, was carried, and a new era in English public life began.

QUEEN ADELAIDE, CONSORT OF WILLIAM IV., IN HER CORONATION ROBES.
From a drawing by F. R. Say.

A classic account of the carrying of the first bill in the House of Commons by a majority of one, is to be found in one of Macaulay's letters: "We set up a shout that you might have heard to Charing Cross, waving our hats, stamping against the floor, and clapping our hands. The tellers scarcely got through the crowd, for the House was thronged up to the table, and all the floor was fluctuating with heads like the pit of a theatre. But you might have heard a pin drop as Duncannon read the numbers. Then again the shouts broke out, and many of us shed tears. I could scarcely refrain. . . . We shook hands and clapped each other on the back, and went out laughing, crying, and huzzaing into the lobby. And no sooner were the outer doors opened, than another shout

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answered that within the House." There was no other scene in the House of Commons so exciting in all the nineteenth century.

The ministry which carried reform might be expected to do little else; but two measures unprejudiced, persons regarded measures such as these. The borough of One Vote, and the characters who would not eat sugar because it was slave-grown, serve to stamp on the memory the very impress of the time.

"THE REFORM BILL RECEIVING THE ROYAL ASSENT IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, 1832."
BY S. W. REYNOLDS.

will always be associated with its fame. One was the Abolition of Slavery, the other the New Poor Law. In Peacock's novels, one of the best pictures of the time, we may see how unconventional and witty, if not

Many thought the new Parliament, which met in 1833, a great declension from the old, and full of presumptuous, impertinent, and self-sufficient persons. At any rate, the ministry could not long rule it, and Lord

"THE CORONATION OF QUEEN VICTORIA, 1837." BY SIR GEORGE HAYTER, R.A.

From the original in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle.

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Grey resigned in 1834, to be followed by Lord Melbourne for a few months, then by Peel for three or four more, and then by Lord Melbourne again. The Reform Act seemed to have introduced into English politics an element of insecurity. It needed a new force to restore the balance. Strange to say, this was given by a young girl. The monarchy had become discredited by the weakness of its representatives. William IV. had many good points, but he was not wise. When he died on June 20, 1837, a new era began.

The fundamental difference between the reigns of the sons of George III. and the reign of his granddaughter is one of character, the character of the sovereign reacting inevitably and insensibly upon the ministry and the nation. What the difference was in 1837 is nowhere better expressed than in the words which Charles Greville, Clerk of the Council, wrote in his private diary on June 21: "William IV. was a man who, coming to the throne at the mature age of sixty-five, was so excited by the exaltation that he nearly went mad, and distinguished himself by a thousand eccentricities of language and conduct, to the alarm or amusement of all who witnessed his strange freaks; and though he was shortly afterwards sobered down into more becoming habits, he always continued to be something of a blackguard and something more of a buffoon. It is but fair to his memory, at the same time, to say that he was a good-natured, kind-hearted, and well-meaning man, and he always acted an honourable and straightforward, if not always a sound and discreet, part. The two principal ministers of his reign, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Grey—though the former was only his minister for a few months—have both spoken of him to me with strong expressions of personal regard and esteem. The young queen, who might well be either dazzled or confounded with the grandeur and novelty of her situation, seems neither the one nor the other, and behaves with a decorum and propriety beyond her years, and with all the sedateness and dignity the want of which was so conspicuous in her uncle."

The auspicious event of the accession of Queen Victoria brings us to the history of our own times, and we close our long series of pictures from bygone periods with a reproduction of Sir George Hayter's painting of the coronation of the young queen. The purpose of our series has been to collect and reproduce in chronological order a large proportion of the mass of pictorial work inspired by events in our national history. To attempt to tell the story of the Victorian period would require far greater space than has hitherto been occupied by our scheme, owing not only to the increasing importance of the events themselves, but to the rapid growth of facilities for recording them in pictorial form, culminating in the development of photography for the faithful representation of contemporary history. Moreover, many of the principal pictures of scenes from our modern history have been previously reproduced, not only in various publications which are accessible to all, but in our own pages as well, in numbers published at the dates of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and the coronations of both King Edward VII. and King George V.

SEA AND LAND.

THE seagull looketh not behind,
Nor thinks he of the shore.
He turns his shoulder to the wind,
He gazeth on the bitter sea,
And harsh cries he,
Although his voice is lost in the sea-roar.

The thrush he seeks a secret bower
The greeny boughs among.
There lies he safe in shine and shower,
He hears the village church-bells ring,
He hears the ploughman sing,
And from deep throat he answers song with song.

C. F. KEARY.

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Lavishly illustrated and finely produced, the

CHRISTMAS DOUBLE NUMBER

OF

The Windsor Magazine

will contain, as in previous issues, but in even greater number and variety,

THE NEW STORIES OF THE GREAT NOVELISTS,

and the latest articles on subjects of great interest and importance by writers of the highest distinction and authority upon their respective themes.

Some impression of the range of talent represented may perhaps be best conveyed by the announcement that among the contributors to the programme of this one number will be:—

MAURICE HEWLETT	**H. G. WELLS**
W. J. LOCKE	**JUSTUS MILES FORMAN**
EDEN PHILLPOTTS	**ROBERT BARR**
E. F. BENSON	**HALLIWELL SUTCLIFFE**
S. MACNAUGHTAN	**MAX PEMBERTON**
FRED M. WHITE	**EDGAR WALLACE**
KEBLE HOWARD	**H. B. MARRIOTT WATSON**

The contributions by these many famous authors will in all cases be complete in the one issue, so that it will form an

UNIQUE CHRISTMAS ANNUAL,

but the majority of its readers will be interested to find that three of the most attractive of the stories are the first complete episodes of the new serial features which will be continued with further instalments, each containing a complete story, in ensuing numbers. The first of these will be a fascinating new series of romantic stories of "The Open Road," by

HALLIWELL SUTCLIFFE,

imagined and chronicled in their author's happiest vein, and distinguished by the characteristics which have endeared his work to a very large public. The series is delightfully illustrated by the one artist for whom it especially called—Fred Pegram.

Another new series, entitled "The Six Rubies," is from the pen of

JUSTUS MILES FORMAN,

author of "The Garden of Lies," and other notable WINDSOR successes. The opening story, a complete drama of strenuous adventure and tense emotional appeal, will be generally pronounced one of the most powerful pieces of work yet done by this favourite author.

The third new series is by that genial and ingenious author,

ROBERT BARR,

and forms a sequel to two former serial features of memorable popularity in the history of the WINDSOR, inasmuch as it chronicles

THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF YOUNG LORD STRANLEIGH.

The first instalment is a complete story as lively and entertaining as any of its predecessors, and has an entirely new setting for the adventurous young peer's further experiences.

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The fine-art feature of the number will take the form of a pictorial record of the principal works in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, with which will be given several

FINELY-PRINTED COLOURED PLATES

reproduced in facsimile from the original paintings, and a long series of black-and-white replicas printed on art paper, the pictures included representing some of the most notable works of modern artists so distinguished as:—

Lord Leighton	**Dante Gabriel Rossetti**	**Sir J. E. Millais, Bart.**
Sir W. B. Richmond, R.A.	**W. Dendy Sadler**	**Sir E. Burne-Jones**
C. Napier Hemy, R.A.	**Henry Holiday**	**B. W. Leader, R.A.**
W. F. Yeames, R.A.	**J. Farquharson, A.R.A.**	**Sir H. von Herkomer, R.A.**

and others.

Prominent among the articles of the number will be a long and important survey of

THE BOY SCOUT MOVEMENT

from the pen of no less an authority than its founder and Commander-in-Chief,

GENERAL SIR ROBERT S. S. BADEN-POWELL, C.B.

This article, which includes many interesting photographic illustrations, is also accompanied by a pair of coloured plates of especial value to all who are interested in the movement.

Another subject illustrated in colours as well as in black-and-white will be a GOLF article, which includes

COLOURED PLATES by G. C. WILMSHURST,

as well as drawings by Hal Ludlow and other artists whose work is well-known to all enthusiasts of the golf links; and in yet lighter vein will be found two of the inimitably funny

DRAWINGS IN COLOURS by LAWSON WOOD,

which no motorist or taxi-cab patron should miss.

Further pages in colours illustrate an article on the Horse Fairs and Shows of Rural England.

The Natural History section of the number will also include a new animal story by

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

For the devotees of Music there will be an interesting article on

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC.

In addition to the

15 NOTABLE COLOURED PLATES 15

there will be a wealth of illustration by such masters of black-and-white art as

Maurice Greiffenhagen	**Harry Furniss**	**G. C. Wilmshurst**
Fred Pegram	**Steven Spurrier**	**Cyrus Cuneo**
Dudley Hardy	**A. J. Gough**	**Charles Pears**
Balliol Salmon	**A. Wallis Mills**	**Septimus E. Scott**

and other clever illustrators.

Thus for sheer range and importance the latest of these remarkable double issues, which established the record in Christmas Number enterprise, and have held it ever since, will be also the best, eclipsing even its own predecessors by its

BRILLIANT VARIETY AND VALUE.

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THE BIRD'S TRAGEDY.

By LAURENCE NORTH,

Author of "Impatient Griselda," "The Golightlys," etc.

THE fledgling had fallen out of its nest, and was fluttering terrified in the dust at the roadside. Just in time the Unwise Parent snatched it from under the wheel of a heavy cart. Far better that he had not. It was, as the event proved, another act of mistaken kindness. Nature, red in tooth and claw, had already doomed that poor bundle of fluffy feathers. Let us, however, leave the ethics of the matter to the discerning reader. Some will justify the act, others will condemn it. The problem remains.

It was a lovely midday of early June. The Unwise Parent had gone to meet the Goblin Queen, who had been spending the morning with some little friends. Nothing in air or sky or smiling fields gave premonition of the sad things to be before sunset. Larks sang in the blue heaven, the cuckoo called from the recesses of the woods, the bees murmured among the flowers, the rill tinkled cheerfully among its pebbles—at last it seemed our island climate had turned over a new leaf. It was good to be alive in the sunshine.

Holding the quivering fledgling in the hollow of closed hands—how its little heart hammered!—the Parent looked about for a possible nest, but none was to be seen. An anxious chirruping from a tall elm told its own tale. Poor parent birds, nothing could be done to help them. The rescuer went on slowly to meet his little daughter.

Up the lane she came, gipsy-like and brown under her broad hat. She had spent a jolly morning, and was full of gossip. Without comment, her father held out his hands. Between his crossed thumbs peeped out a little keen-eyed head.

"Oh, my daddy!" the Goblin shrieked. "The *darling!*"

The Father told his story. "Poor little birdie!" said the Goblin. "What shall we do with it? Oh!"

The fledgling, conscious of some relaxation of imprisoning fingers—it was hard to hold the creature gently yet firmly enough—wriggled free, fluttered for a yard or two, and sank in the dust again. With little trouble, it was taken up, its heart drumming more furiously than ever. It seemed as if the poor thing would die of terror. But to leave it to its fate would have been impossible.

"We shall keep it safe until it can fly properly, then we'll set it free, Goblin."

"I wish," said the Queen, "we could send it to Goblin Land. No harm would come to it there."

"We must do what we can here."

The Goblin Queen nodded, and stroked the tiny head with one dainty finger. Her sympathetic touch seemed to soothe the poor waif. It lay still, and the palpitation subsided. The two guardians walked on leisurely, discussing plans.

"We must get a little cage," said the lady. "I saw some lovely ones in Old Oily's. Let us go round by his shop."

So it was agreed, and the wayfarers struck aside into a field-path that would lead them past the shop of mystery.

"What a pity," said Elsa, "we can't find the nest! It would be so nice to put him back. How pleased his mummy would be!"

"Alas, that is out of the question. But in a few days it will be able to fly quite well, and then it can go safely."

"Hullo," cried the Goblin, "here's the newspaper boy from the station! Let's show it to him."

The literary gentleman approached, and was deeply interested. He understood such matters far better than his professed business, which consists, for the most part, in a skilful delivery of the wrong papers at the wrong houses. He determined the species with the acumen of a Bowdler-Sharpe, and gave valuable hints as to food and treatment. With due acknowledgments, the others passed on.

Another paroxysm of futile fluttering shook the captive. The Goblin stroked its head again, cooed to it, and reassured it. The birdling lay still.

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"Mightn't I carry it, daddy?"

"I fear your little hands are not big enough. You would have to squeeze to keep hold of it at all. I can make a little cave of my hands, you see, and it isn't hurt at all. It just lies in the hollow. Very soon it will have more room."

"Yes, when we get down to Oily's," said the Goblin hopefully.

"It's rough luck it should go into a cage at all, you know, but there's nothing else to be done."

"No," the Goblin agreed, with a wise nod. "And we'll be very kind to it, won't we, daddy?"

"Of course," the Goblin's father replied, wondering how far it was kindness. Still, in an imperfect world, compromise was inevitable. Good intention did not always justify an act—more often it stultified it. But what else was there to be done? And in a few days the bird would be at liberty. For all that, he had misgivings. Nature, or Fate, had already given one decision against this poor little life. There had been interference with inexorable Law. Could it lead to good? The Unwise Parent doubted. "Not a sparrow falls to the ground——" Bitter experience had taught him how futile, how fatal, it is for mortals to play Providence, a *rôle* which usually means a wanton thwarting of the designs of that Power. However, here was the bird; it might, at least, have its chance of life. Life? That would have been crushed out by the cart-wheel half an hour ago but for a chance, an interference, possibly unwarrantable. Oh, life was a puzzle! How was one to know whether one was the instrument of Providence, or only a sentimental bungler? Impossible until the issue appeared. But away with dull philosophy! It was too fine a day for introspection, and the child, at least, was happy in the thought of the rescued fledgling.

By this time the procession of the bird was bearing down upon Old Oily's, whose shop, it may be mentioned, for the benefit of those who have not read his history in a former WINDSOR MAGAZINE, is the Whiteley's of a certain rustic neighbourhood. There you may buy everything from a needle to an ironclad. This last is not such a wild statement as it seems. For one day, when a rashly jocular customer told Oily he believed he could supply even an ironclad, the merchantman moved not an eyelid, but disappeared into the dim regions of the back shop. "'Ere ye are, sir," he said, returning in a few seconds; and, as he spoke, he thrust into the customer's hand a toy battleship, fearfully and wonderfully realistic. Old Oily is not to be beat. His enterprise, however, has lately taken a lamentable form, out of all harmony with the genius of the countryside, but of that in a future story.

Rising to the present occasion, Oily set out his bird-cages, with copious eloquence on their several excellences. The Goblin chose carefully and long. A pretty green one at last satisfied her.

"Poor little chap!" said Oily. "'E'll do nicely there. And now, missy, you'll need a nice little dish or two for seed and water. 'E'll soon eat seed. I've a very superior line in glass dishes, and a small tin pan for 'is bath. And shall I maike up a little packet o' seed, sir? Saive you comin' down again."

Thus Oily extended his order to the utmost limits. When the cage was duly furnished, the prisoner was committed, and the procession moved up the hill. The captive seemed content enough, perched, and did not beat his wings, providentially.

At home there was subdued jubilation and fearful interest. The Engineer left his railway, which was laid down to-day on planks on the lawn—a new device inspired by the fine weather—and the infant Margaret, wheeling a teddy bear and her beloved Beastie in a doll's perambulator, came to admire and chuckle, "Nice dicky, nice dicky!" With that guileless babe, however, came the first hint of Nemesis. Inseparable from her are the two family cats, Chris and Fluff. The full style and title of the former is Christopher Columbus. The name was given by the precociously well-informed Engineer before he was out of the nursery, and when the cat was also a mere kitten. "But why Columbus, Boy?" his father asked. "Oh, because, you know, he's always exploring!" So Christopher Columbus it was from that day forward.

From the moment the bird entered, the cats were a new anxiety. Their interest in the cage was uncanny. However, they were shoo'd away, and the children went to dinner, the cage being set where they could see it. The bird, too, fed on the scientific menu prescribed by the newsboy, seemed happy and contented.

After dinner the cage was hung in the porch, high up in a place which, it seemed, not even the most agile cat could reach. The children went out to play in the garden, and the nominal master of the house retired to his own den for rest, reflection, and a pipe. But he was not left long in peace. Very

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soon the Goblin tapped at the door and entered, her eyes blazing with excitement.

"Daddy, daddy, listen—up there in the oak tree!"

Through the open window came a series of bird calls, but an obtuse Elder did not at first understand.

"It's the mother and father birds," the Goblin screamed; "they've found out and followed!"

The Unwise Parent went down to the porch. Sure enough, the bereaved pair! Sometimes they chirped from the tree; sometimes they darted past the cage in low flights, calling, calling always. The prisoner answered: "Peep, peep!"

"Poor things!" said Goblin. "But you'll get him back before long."

The Elder did not tell her that when the nestling was strong enough to be trusted with liberty, the parent birds would have lost interest in him. Sufficient unto the day——

"How clever of them to follow so far! They must have watched us all the way," said the Goblin, returning to her dolls.

"'Poor little birdie!' said the Goblin. 'What shall we do with it? Oh!'"

Her father also returned to his pursuits, and for an hour or so there was peace. The afternoon wore lazily away. Sometimes one could hear the Goblin chirping to the bird, and saying sweet little things to him. Then duty claimed her, and a painstaking performance on the piano sounded through the house. But the Goblin's practising, thanks to the Fates, is never worrying. The child may not be a prodigy—perish the

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thought!—but she has the touch of a fairy, and a devotion to music that comes very near being a passion. It will rise to that later. Meanwhile, she goes unbidden, at every odd moment, to the piano, and already her playing is not contemptible. A wrestle with accidentals seems to bring her joy unspeakable. The brown eyes are glued to the music-book, and never once look at the deft little fingers. The only trouble is an indomitable desire to read things at present beyond her. Portfolios belonging to grown-ups are ruthlessly ransacked, and queer snatches of classics float at times through the house. Which is all very encouraging, no doubt, but rather premature. However, let no disdainful word quench the divine fire. One day, sure enough, it will leap into flame, or the promise of those burning eyes will be sadly belied.

Suddenly the notes ceased. There was a sound of a hurried scramble upstairs, the door flew open, and the Goblin, distraught and in tears, rushed in.

"Daddy, daddy, come! The birdie—the poor birdie! Chris—— Come—come! Oh, daddy, daddy!"

"Keep away, darling," her father cried, springing up. Horrible visions assailed him. What had the child seen? He rushed downstairs and saw——

No one could have guessed the cat's ingenious determination, but the rough-cast wall had given him a claw-hold where that had seemed impossible. A long spring—perhaps a series of attempted springs—had been successful. High on the wall he clung, and the cage, once reached, had helped further. The poor prisoner, in his terror, had come within reach. A wicked talon had made sure. Half through the bars—and the rest—unspeakable. Heaven send the child had not seen the worst! She had heard the first cries of that whirling death grapple. That was grief enough.

Christopher, dragged off, fled. After all, he had only obeyed Nature. So now to end his work. But that was, happily, not needful. The red, torn little victim breathed for just a second longer, then lay still, and the eyes filmed. The father sought his daughter.

Face down on a sofa cushion lay the child, weeping her heart out. "My birdie—oh, my poor birdie! I heard the noise, I ran out, and—and—— Oh, daddy, daddy! Oh, the—poor—mother-bird! Do—you—think—she—saw?"

But, mercifully, children keep grief only as long as grief keeps them. The storm spent itself at last, and, as far as Elders know, Elsa did not see the worst. That must certainly have happened after she ran for help.

The Engineer dug a grave, and the obsequies were celebrated with consoling pomp and affection. Elsa and Margaret strewed flowers. The Sexton took an exalted view of his office, and delivered a funeral oration, the style of which was modelled on the more bombastic passages of adventure books.

"We here lay to rest," he said, "an unfortunate dicky-bird, foully done to death by Christopher Columbus, who, with a blood-curdling yell, leaped upon his wretched victim and tore——"

Here, warned by Elsa's impending tears, the father laid a restraining hand on his son's too eloquent mouth.

"Speak of the poor bird's virtues," he suggested.

"He was young and innocent," pursued the orator; "his feathers were not quite ripe. He has gone to the tomb, whither we must all follow him. No doubt he is happier in heaven. Amen. *Requi—requies*—— What is it, daddy—the Latin, I mean?"

"*Requiescat in pace*," said the father with proper solemnity. Whereupon, fearing anti-climax, for the Sexton had produced a hymn-book, he dissolved the assembly.

The cage is hidden away in a corner of the box-room.

LEFT BEHIND.

HOW silent are the woods to-day!
The columbines have laid away
Their dainty wimples, every one.
The foxglove has forgotten quite
The halcyon days of her delight,
For rain drips sadly, on and on,
And all the little folk are gone.
All? Surely not, for there, beside
The fallen leaves, I saw one hide!
Then find her now who can! The maid
Has slipped within the hazel shade.
Push back the mosses soft and wet,
And see! One last pale violet?
Nay, for the music of the wind
Says 'tis a fairy left behind.

FAY INCHFAWN.

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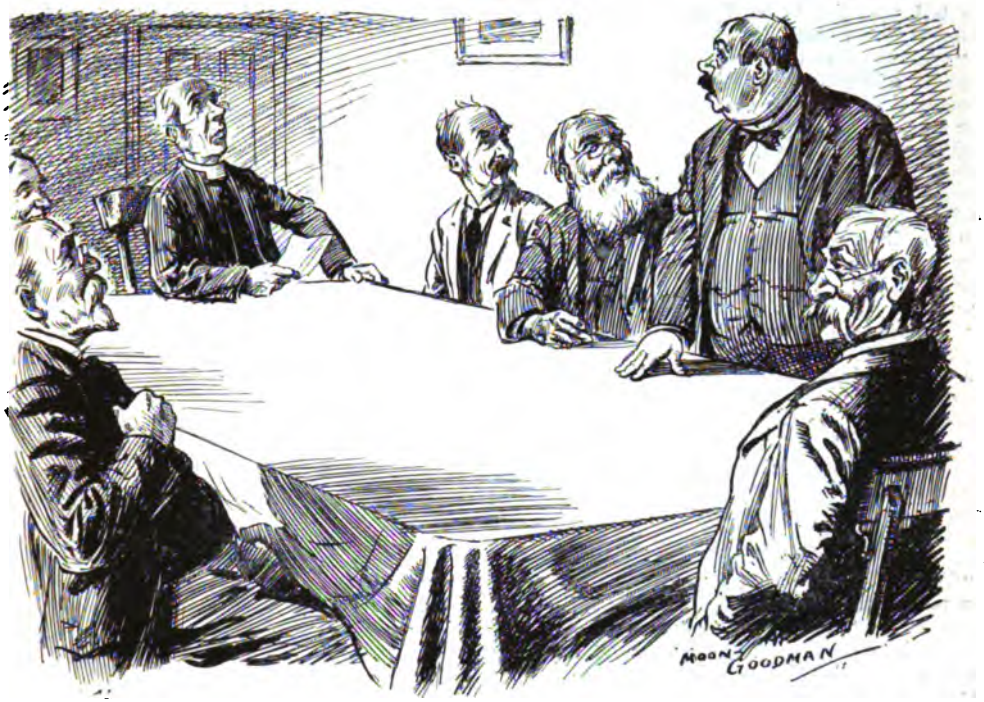

AT THE PARISH COUNCIL.

THE VICAR: Well, the first thing to do this month is to have the new burial ground consecrated.
RURAL MEMBER: 'Ere, I don't 'old with that! I 'ad it done ter my back-yard, and it's that slippery in frosty weather, you can't walk on it.

THE EDITOR'S SCRAP-BOOK.

A PROBLEM IN DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

By Charles Marriage.

"WHAT'S your post like this morning, Sylvia?" I asked. "Mine's rotten."

Sylvia was surrounded by illustrated catalogues. Presently she looked up.

"I told you, didn't I, that we had got to have a new kitchen range?" she began. "Well, there's a lot here about ranges that I can't make head or tail of."

"Read it over carefully, then," I said, "before you go and order one. There is nothing so foolish as having to be taught by a shopman things that every woman ought to have known from childhood. And never insist on having the genuine article. In five minutes he will have shown you that you have committed a frightful breach of etiquette."

"Don't be silly, Tom! According to this book, there *is* only one sort of range to have."

"Well, then, what don't you understand? I'm not an expert in ranges, but I expect I can explain a catalogue."

"All right. What is a boot-boiler?" she began.

"A what?" I asked.

"Here is a picture of something called a powerful type of boot-boiler. You can have a tubular boot-boiler or an inverted one, whichever you prefer," she went on.

"Tubular or inver—— Oh, well, of course—of course you can. It's merely a matter of taste, of course."

"Don't go on saying 'of course.' The thing is, what does it mean?"

I collected myself.

"I think, my dear Sylvia," I said calmly, "that, if you read on further, you will find that that particular apparatus applies to ranges used in hospitals. With the tremendous supply of surgical boots, some too old-fashioned to be used again—— You have heard of inverted feet, haven't you?" I waved the subject aside. "No doubt very useful in hospitals, but an unnecessary extravagance in a little house like ours. Besides which—— What is your next difficulty?"

The book Sylvia was holding up in front of her face shook a little, but she said nothing.

"Nothing else to ask?" I said cheerfully.

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To tell you the truth, I wasn't very happy about the boot business.

"'All the above prices include our patent man-lid and rubber joint,'" she began again presently. "But how nice of them! Of course, one *must* make experiments, and it would be awfully nice to feel you weren't spoiling anything real. All the same, it can't really be made of rubber. Think of the smell of roast rubber!"

"You don't mean to say you imagine——" I began, but was interrupted by a scream.

"'Here's something,'" she exclaimed excitedly, "that ensures a perfectly tight joint. What an extraordinary way of putting it!"

"What do you take it to mean?" I asked interestedly.

"Well, I suppose it's some way of cooking meat in wine, but it looks very odd in print. Who writes these booklets, I wonder?"

I looked at Sylvia suspiciously. Was the boot-boiler explanation rankling?

"Some ovens are single," she went on, "and here's one described as having a bold, handsome appearance. I think we'd better have that one, don't you? The servants are more likely to stay."

"If you treat the subject flippantly, you will never learn anything at all about ranges," I said severely.

"I didn't seem to learn so *very* much when I asked you questions, somehow," she replied. "But look here, let's go down to the shop together, throw ourselves entirely on the man's mercy, and ask him to explain it all."

' is what we eventually did.

By the by, do *you* know what a boot-boiler is?

Ah, I thought as much!

A NOTABLE SPECIMEN.

COLLECTOR: What's that spider in the glass case?
DEALER: That's the spider vat inspired Robert the Bruce to write that vamous song, "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!"

THE gloomiest person in the coffee-room of an hotel in Salisbury the other day was a certain young man with a bag, of the genus commercial traveller. A neighbour entered into conversation with him, and, after a few remarks about the weather, rallied him on his lack of cheer. "Well, perhaps you'd have the hump if you'd just wasted as much time and energy as I have, and got as tired as I am, all for nothing," responded the melancholy one. "It was this way. I did pretty well in Salisbury, and got round nearly every shopkeeper in the place, and, of course, I kept on hearing Stonehenge mentioned wherever I went, and as everyone seemed to go there, I thought I might as well try my luck there too. So I went." He lapsed into gloomy silence. "Fine place, isn't it?" said his companion. "Fine, it may be," retorted the other, "but it wasn't much use for *my* purpose. You see, I'm travelling with cash registers!"

MRS. BROWN: How is your husband's gout?
MRS. JONES: Better, I think; or perhaps I'm getting used to it!

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A LITTLE TOO CLEVER.

BILL (shouting to mate below): 'Erb, there's a gentleman 'ere wants to see yer.
'ERB (who has been trying to sell two fowls, which he stole on the previous evening, to a local dealer): If it's the gen'leman about the fowls, tell 'im 'e can 'ave 'em for half-a-crown apiece.

SHE knew nothing about housekeeping, so when Mary Ann said, "Please, mum, the kettle is boiling," "Never mind, the water will get all the stronger," was her reply.

"I SAY, old chap, what is that which comes to table, is *cut*, but never *eaten?*"

"Sure, you'll be meanin' a pack of cards," was the ready reply of a quick-witted Irishman.

ONE day little Tommy's mother missed him for some time, and, when he reappeared, she asked: "Where have you been, my pet?"

"Playing postman," replied the "pet." "I gave letters to all the houses in our road—real letters, too."

"Where on earth did you get them?" questioned his mother in amusement, which changed to horror when he answered—

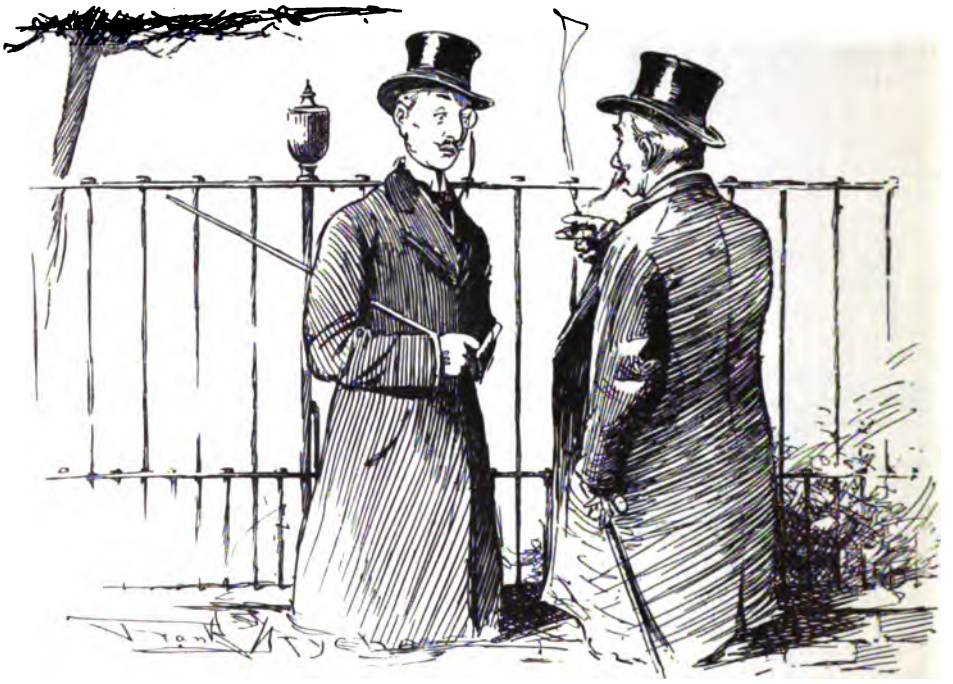
"They were those old ones in your wardrobe drawer tied up with ribbon."

THE DELICATE MONARCH.

Oh, a terror in battle am I!
And in shouting I'm easily first,
Then the flash of my terrible eye
Betokens the warrior's thirst;
But my toe has such horrible shoots,
When the enemy get in perspective,
That I never can pull on my boots,
And can only fall back on invective.
Ah, I feel I could smash every one—
That is, if I ever began!—
Yet I can't stand the sound of a gun,
Oh, I am such a delicate man!

With the might of my muscular hand
I could scatter the foe far and wide,
I could scatter their forces like sand,
For my biceps they would not abide.
Yet I get such a cold in my head,
When my blood is on fire with the slaughter,
That I stop in my palace instead,
Put my feet in hot mustard and water;
And this is the reason, all know,
Why I *feel* so much more than I *can*,
For I should be a desperado
If I weren't such a delicate man!

Arthur Compton-Rickett.



THEIR AFFAIR.

"So you've got engaged to two girls at the same time. What are you going to do about it?"
"I? I'm all right. What are they going to do?"

"WHAT broke up their happy home?"
"It skidded and struck a telegraph-pole."

EMPLOYER: You're late again!
NEW CLERK: Well, you said you didn't want a man who watched the clock.

ALL men have a sense of justice in their hearts, but it rarely extends to the pocket-book.

AN aeroplane has this advantage over an automobile: when it breaks down, it doesn't have to be towed in.

"WANT to buy a dog, Pete?"
"What ails him?"
"Nothing."
"Then what ye selling him for?"
"Nothing."
"I'll take him."

THEY told him he snored, so he said he would keep awake on the next night to ascertain the truth of this statement.

A GREAT punster was once asked to make an extempore pun. "On what subject?" he said. "On the King," was the reply. "Oh," said the punster, "the King is not a subject!"

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OF COURSE NOT!

MRS. CASEY: Yisterday was Mrs. Maloney's birthday, and her husband gave her a silver teapot.

MRS. MURPHY: Solid?

MRS. CASEY: Shure, you're joking. How could she put tea in it if it were solid?

JUNGLING.

We press our faces against the pane,
To feel the battering of the rain;
We shrink from the trembling of the glass
When the tremendous wind-gusts pass.

But, oh, the things that we hear and see
Before it's time to go up to tea—
Things grand and queer, and horrid and sweet,
Down there in the jungle of the street.

The asphalt gleams in the fierce arc-light
Like panthers' eyes in the Indian night;
And the tinkle-tank of the brewer's dray
Is a temple bell in the far-away.

The coalman's hoarse and hollow cry
Is a tiger's echoing to the sky;
And, like an elephant in a fuss,
Lumbers and trumpets the motor-'bus.

The newsboys racing with rounded back
Are monkeys riding on servants black;
And the people with big umbrellas spread
Are buffaloes hunching home to bed.

The butcher's boy with the blackened ey
Is a slinking Thug of deepest dye;
The snappy collies across the way
Are wild hyenas prowling for prey.

And Doctor Smith, with his wicked smile—
He is a cruel old crocodile;
And the curate mild, with the bulgy brow—
He is a harmless sacred cow.

The lovely lady who lives next door—
She is the Begum of Travancore;
And her husband, stiff as stiff can be,
The rich old Rajah of Trincomalee;

Her big chauffeur, all goggles and hair,
Is a tousled, tough Tibetan bear;
While her private car, XZ 19,
Is a diamond-studded palanquin.

Policeman Jones, who's a friend of ours,
Is a Brahmin priest of magic powers;
He wears on his arm by day and night
The mark of his caste in blue and white.

Over and round us the City's roar
Is the voice of floods by Ganges' shore,
And the smoke and flame of the watchman's fire
Is flame and smoke of a funeral pyre.

Roof and chimney, all shiny and wet,
Are dome and tower and minaret;
And where *you* see thick brown fog on high,
***We* see the stars of the Indian sky.**

W. A. Mackenzie.

THE teacher asked: "When did William the Conqueror invade England?" After the silence had become painful, she ordered: "Open your history book. What does it say there?"

A boy answered: "William the Conqueror, 1066."

"Now," said the teacher, "you have seen that before. Why didn't you remember the date?"

"Well," replied the boy, "I thought it was his telephone number."

JUST FOR A TREAT!

CUSTOMER (who has noticed boy gazing at him very intently): Surely you are not going to let that boy shave me?

BARBER: Well, if you wouldn't mind, sir. You see, it's his birthday.

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THEY were giving a big dinner, and the coachman had come to help wait at the table. Several persons had suffered from his lack of experience, and in serving peas he approached a very deaf old lady and inquired—

"Peas, mum?"

No answer.

"Peas, mum?" (Louder.)

The old lady saw that someone was speaking to her, and she lifted her ear trumpet to the questioner. The coachman, seeing the large end of the trumpet directed toward him, thought—

"It must be a new way o' takin' em, but I s'pose she likes 'em that way."

And down the trumpet went the peas.

MIS-ADDRESSED.

Phyllis sent Coryden, one d
Her heart by letter post;
But on the way—oh, sad to
The precious missive went
And Phyllis never was
For that which had be

When Coryden next met th
Whose property was lost—
"She is," he said, "a heartl
And not for me!" Coryden
"In future," Phyllis cried,
Always to send my hear
S.

QUITE ALL RIGHT!

ENERGETIC PARK RANGER: All right, sir! Don't hurry, sir! I've got it, sir!

AT some Irish inns situated in remote parts of the country, the ideas on the subject of water for purposes of personal cleanliness are, to say the least of it, rather primitive. One gentleman, on the first morning after his arrival, expressed a wish to take a bath, when, to his great astonishment, his request met with this reply: "What! Didn't you come clean?"

"I WANT to see you just a minute," said the lady at the bottom of the steps leading up to the front door, "but this hobble skirt is so tight I can't climb the stairs. You come out, won't you?"

"I would if I could," sighed the one inside, "but this new hat is too wide to go through the doorway."

LITTLE William one day approached his grandmother and inquired—

"Can you crack nuts, grandma?"

"No, dear. I lost all my teeth years ago," she replied.

"Then, grandma, please hold these for me," he said, extending both hands full of walnuts. "I'm going for some more."

AMONG the members of a working gang on a certain railroad was an Irishman who claimed to be very good at figures. The boss, thinking that he would get ahead of Pat, said: "Say, Pat, how many shirts can you get out of a yard?"

"That depinds," answered Pat, "on whose yard you got into."

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MORE REMINISCENCES BY ELLEN TERRY

THE NATURE ARTICLE BY CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS

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WINDSOR MAGAZINE

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NEW PATENT "TEAETTA" TEA-MAKER

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"Whistles when Water Boils."
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The "Teaetta" combines Kettle, Teapot, Slop Basin, &c., all in one.

An Ideal and Useful Present.

Size:	1 Pint	2 Pints	3 Pints
Plated or Copper	22/6	31/6	42/-

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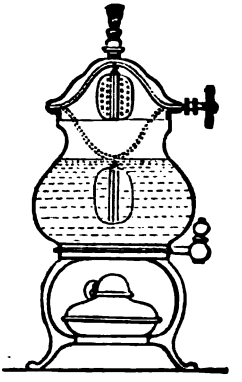

Diagram of the Interior, with Infuser in and out of water.

In case of difficulty, write to Manufacturer—

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30 Days' Free Trial of this razor through your dealer

Every dealer is authorized to return the money, without question, to any purchaser of an AutoStrop who, after shaving with it for 30 days, considers that its advantages have been overstated.

Simple, self-contained stropping

Insert the strop in the razor—move the razor to and fro—the blade reverses automatically and in an instant you have a keen edge.

Because it is impossible to describe by wording or diagram the efficiency and *simplicity* of its self-contained stropping device, we ask you to try the AutoStrop yourself—and get your money back if it does not give you more satisfaction than any other razor you have tried.

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It is so well made, so absolutely right in every principle of its construction, that it gives a lifetime's satisfactory shaving service. There is No Continuous Expense for New Blades—Nothing to go wrong—Nothing to take apart—Nothing to adjust—and every blade can be stropped over and over again, and made to give just the same smooth velvet shave as when new. It saves time, too—takes only 10 seconds to strop and 12 seconds to clean.

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TONE

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That represents years of patient experiment—with various woods, with different proportions, with numerous vibratory surfaces—and it is simply astonishing how slight a variation in size, in shape, in position, produces discord instead of harmony.

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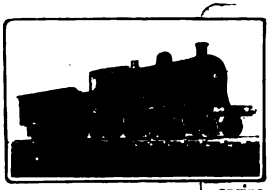

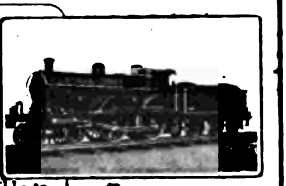

When your boy

was quite a little "dot," 'most as soon as he could toddle, he loved to play at trains. And how he used to "chuff-chuff" as he pulled his wooden engine round the playroom or the garden.

But now of course he's grown—much too big for an engine that would only go when it was pulled—grown possibly to appreciate the wonder of our railways, and to wish that he could have a real model railway of his own.

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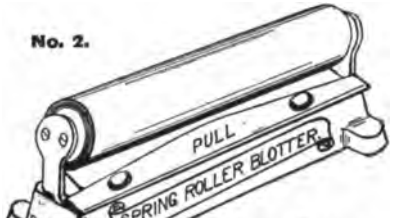

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The four lines of letters in this square stand for two boys' and two girls' names. We guarantee to send you, **Absolutely Free,** one of our famous Simulation 18-ct. **Gold Watches** (ladies' or gents') if you send us the correct names; but you must comply with our condition; and promise to show the watch to your friends, as we wish to advertise our goods. It costs you nothing to try, so send your answer at once. A postcard will do.—The **London General Supply Association** (Dep. 63),

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APPALLING DISCOVERY WHICH AFFECTS YOUR HAIR

National Danger of Baldness.

ROYAL HAIR SPECIALIST'S GENEROUS OFFER TO READERS.

THE DISCOVERY.

Mr. Edwards, the leading Court hair specialist and inventor of Harlene Hair Drill, has made an appalling discovery.

He has discovered that hundreds of thousands of ladies and gentlemen to-day are quite unknowingly doing their utmost to murder their hair.

These ladies and gentlemen, who are doubtless most particular over their appearance, are unconsciously cultivating baldness.

The distressing picture on the left, with the enlarged photograph of a hair and its root in the scalp, shows only too plainly how this is.

Here you have in graphic form displayed the terrible nature of Mr. Edward's discovery. The head on the left is the result of neglecting to drill your hair with "Harlene." Note the enlarged photograph of a single hair, and see how the root is choked with scurf. On the right you see a Harlene Hair Drilled head with its rich growth of hair. Note again the large photograph shown alongside the picture—note the absence of scurf—the entire cleanliness, and the healthy state of the hair. Your head is one of these two. Send to-day for the Free Sample Outfit, and make it the Harlene Hair Drill head of rich flowing hair.

There is an accumulation of scurf literally choking the hair root, and allowing it no nourishment. The hair is being slowly but surely murdered.

"But I carefully wash my head and remove that scurf," someone replies.

This is a most appalling error.

Mr. Edwards has discovered that *no amount of washing* the scalp can remove anything but a small portion of this accumulation.

Think what this means.

It means that you, who are so particular of your personal cleanliness, are actually permitting an accumulation of scurf and filth to collect on your head, and thereby murder your hair. No wonder you are filled with disgust.

No hair can withstand the insidious attacks of this loathsome scurf.

You may not have noticed it yet, but this is what will surely happen. Your hair will lose its elasticity, become brittle, split at the ends, lose its gloss and lustre, become faded and grey, fall out in handfuls.

BALDNESS PARTIAL OR ENTIRE THREATENS YOU.

Is it not a truly terrible prospect?

But Mr. Edwards has not only made his appalling discovery, he has gone further, and furnished the remedy for this disgusting condition.

He has invented a secret process which enables you to thoroughly cleanse the scalp, dissolve away *all* the scurf, and actually nourish the hair-roots, producing and retaining that rich flowing growth so much admired.

This secret method is the famous Harlene Hair Drill, as used daily by all possessors of flowing hair, from

Harlene Hair Drill not only grows hair strong and vigorous, where previously was little or no growth, *it is the only way to retain your hair's health.*

Unless you wish to murder your hair—but, of course, you do not wish to continue doing so now that you have seen how terrible the effects of neglect are—you must start your Harlene Hair Drill to-day.

Harlene Hair Drill cures all the following hair and scalp disorders just by two minutes' practice every day:—

—Total Baldness (even of years' standing).
—Partial or Patchy Baldness.
—Thinning of Hair over the temples.
—Thin, weak, straggling Hair.
—Hair which falls out whenever brushed or combed.
—Hair which splits at the ends.
—Dull, dead-looking, lustre-lacking Hair.
—Dry, brittle Hair.
—Greasy, inelastic Hair.
—Deposit of Scurf and Dandruff.
—Discoloured Hair.
—Irritation of the Scalp.

ROYAL HAIR SPECIALIST'S GENEROUS OFFER TO ALL READERS.

Realising how distressed the readers will be at his appalling discovery, Mr. Edwards has decided to continue for a short time longer the distribution of his valuable Free Harlene Hair Drill Outfits.

It is Mr. Edwards' aim and ambition to save these ladies and gentlemen from surely approaching baldness. And therefore he makes this astonishingly generous offer.

GENEROUS FREE GIFT TO EVERY READER.

Below there is printed a coupon. Fill it up and send it (with 3*d.* in stamps to pay postage of return outfit) to the Edwards' Harlene Co., 104, High Holborn, London, W.C.

In return, you will be sent the following free Hair-Growing Toilet Gift. It contains:—

1. A bottle containing a week's supply of that delightful hair-food and tonic dressing, HARLENE FOR THE HAIR.
2. A packet of CREMEX FOR THE SCALP, a delightful Shampoo Powder for home use, which thoroughly cleanses the Scalp from Scurf, and prepares the hair for the Hair-Drill treatment.
3. Mr. Edwards' private book of "HAIR-DRILL" RULES, which shows you how, by practising them for two minutes' a day, you can put a stop to the falling or fading of your hair, and restore the latter to luxuriant, healthy and lustrous abundance.

All Chemists and Stores sell Harlene-for-the-Hair in 1*s.*, 2*s.* 6*d.*, and 4*s.* bottles; Cremex in 1*s.* boxes of 7 shampoos; single shampoos, 2*d.*; or you can obtain them post free from the Edwards' Harlene Co., 104, High Holborn, London, W.C.

THIS COUPON ENTITLES YOU TO ONE WEEK'S "HARLENE HAIR-DRILL" OUTFIT.

To the EDWARDS' HARLENE CO.,
104, High Holborn, London, W.C.

Dear Sirs.—Please send me by return of post a presentation Toilet Outfit for practising "Harlene Hair-Drill," including Free Bottle of Harlene for the Hair.

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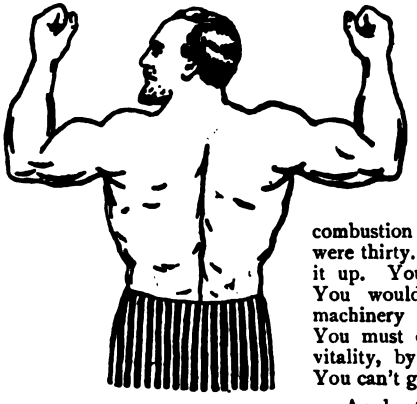

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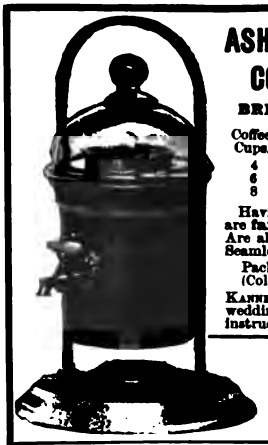

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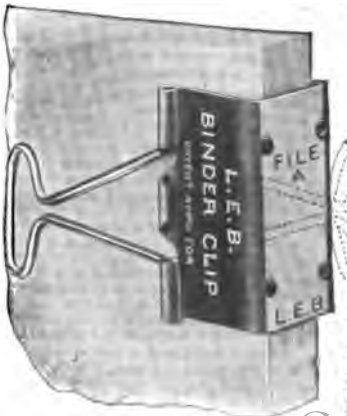

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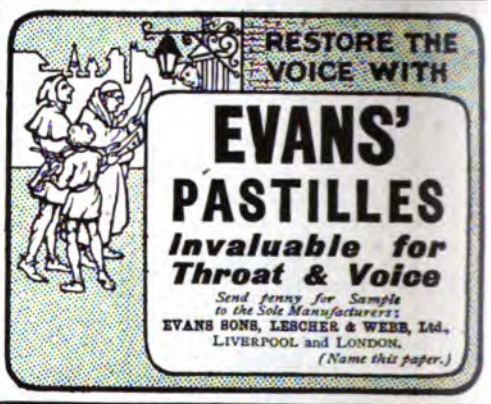

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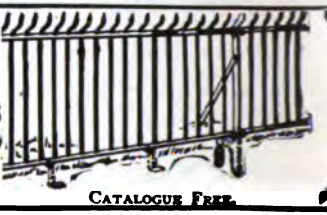

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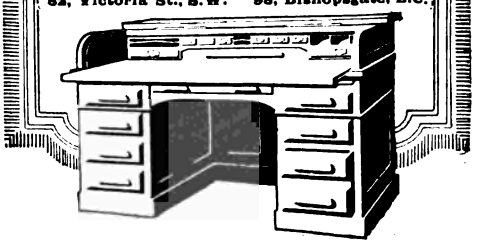

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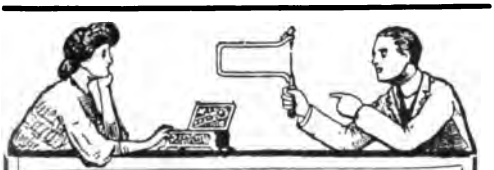

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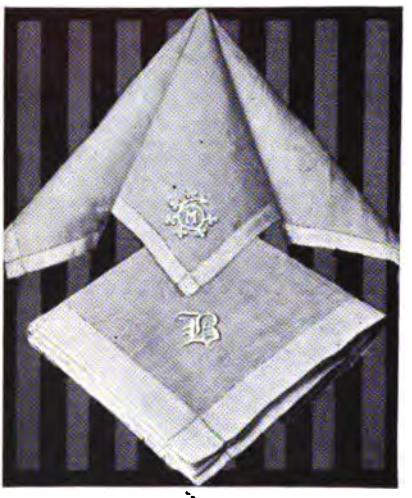

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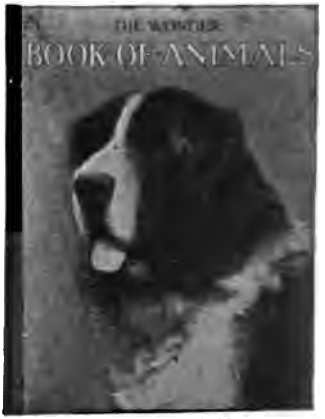

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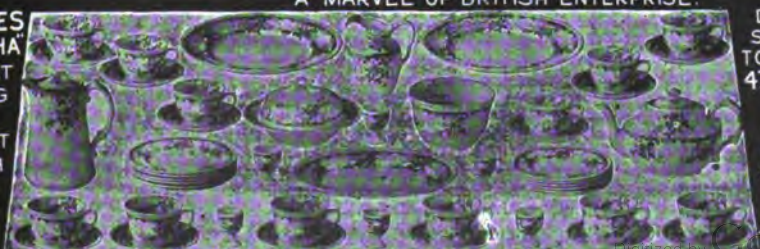

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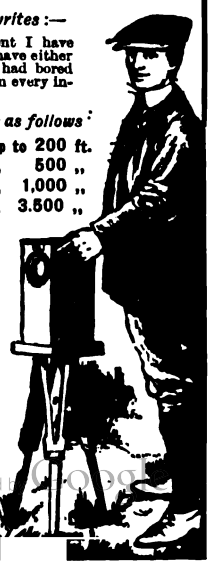

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